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EAST INDIAMEN

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S
MARITIME SERVICE

BY

SIR EVAN COTTON
C.I.E.

EDITED BY

SIR CHARLES FAWCETT

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Foreword

THIS STUDY of the East India Company's Maritime Service is both timely and important. Timely, because it appears just when the new Indian Union is striving to create a truly Indian naval and maritime power; important, because in analysing the sources of strength of the Company's sea-power in the Indian Ocean it re-emphasises the fundamental truth that naval power is effective and lasting in so far as it rests on maritime strength. During India's long history many powers within her frontiers have created navies; but they did not last, mainly because a self-sufficient India could usually get on without maritime endeavour, and therefore ultimately without naval power. In sharp contrast, the European nations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, increasingly aware of their need for overseas trade, consciously and persistently sought to control their seaways by seapower. Hence, when the European Companies rounded the Cape of Good Hope, they swept the eastern seas. By 1815 Britain finally emerged supreme in the Indian Ocean because she had also triumphed in European waters, and to this naval victory, the East India Company's maritime contribution was decisive.

In our Commonwealth of Nations, which owes its creation and existence to the exercise of sea power, the study of naval and maritime history is strangely neglected. No full scale treatment, for example, of the rise and establishment of British naval supremacy in the Indian Ocean has yet been published. This volume, which fills one of the gaps in that story, is therefore the more to be welcomed.

The author, Sir Evan Cotton, who died in 1939, would have been delighted by the renaissance of Indian sea power. He loved India and long toiled for her. He came of a family that is believed to be unique in that without a break for over 150 years it has served the Company and Crown in or for India. His father, grandfather, and great grandfather were all in the civil service; and his father, Sir Henry Cotton, was one of the earliest supporters of *swaraj* for India. Sir Evan's own work as a practising barrister in the High Court at Calcutta for thirteen years (1893–1906), and as a member of the Corporation of that city for six years, gave him the opportunity to study the vicissitudes of the city's life and history, which he turned to good purpose in his books, *The Century of India*, 1800–1900; *Calcutta Old and New*; and as part editor of *Hartley House, Calcutta*, a novel of the days of Warren Hastings.

On his return to England, he led a busy life as Editor of *India*, the London organ of the Indian National Congress, and for many years as a member of the London County Council, and in 1918 as a Liberal M.P. for East Finsbury. In 1922, he was chosen to be the first President of the Bengal Legislative Council, newly established at Calcutta, under the Government of India Act, 1919. With his wide experience, moderation and sagacity, he did his duties in a way that won the esteem of both Indians and Europeans, and set a standard for his successors. In 1923-25 he also acted as Chairman of the Indian Historical Records Commission. Indeed, his life-long study of history is attested by this present work, which was in progress when he died.

We are fortunate indeed in the editor, Sir Charles Fawcett, whose services to India and to the study of her past are distinguished. Entering the Indian Civil Service in 1890, he gained wide experience in judicial administration, finally becoming in 1920 a Puisne Judge of the Bombay High Court. After his retirement he put his talents and knowledge to magnificent use in writing a standard work on

The First Century of British Justice in India. His substantial and valuable contributions to this study of the Company's Maritime Service bear witness to the richness and precision of his scholarship.

C. H. PHILIPS

University of London
July, 1949.

Introduction

NO FINER FLEET of merchantmen ever sailed the seas than that which carried the trade of the Honourable East India Company. When the China monopoly was lost in 1834, the dispossessed commanders represented, in their memorial to the Court of Directors for compensation, that their service had existed for upwards of two hundred years and that during that period they had been 'in a great degree instrumental in acquiring and securing the now vast territories of British India for the Company and in advancing its commercial success.' The claim was fully justified, and yet, while much has been said regarding the Company's servants on land, singularly little has been written about their servants at sea. In the following pages an attempt will be made to collect such material as is available, and to present a picture not only of the ships but of the men who sailed in them.

In order to avoid a multiplicity of footnotes, authorities have not, as a rule, been given. But these are not numerous. The *locus classicus* is Hardy's *Register of Ships employed in the service of the East India Company*; but the latest edition (1835) is not in the British Museum nor in the India Office Library. From such forgotten books as Grose's *Voyage to the East Indies* and James Forbes' *Oriental Memoirs* much interesting information has been obtained. The *Memoirs* of George Elers and of John Shipp have also been laid under occasional contribution. Use has likewise been made of the two volumes of Lady Anne Barnard's letters — the one published by the Clarendon Press, in 1924, and the other at Cape Town; of Mr. H. B. Morse's admirable work on the

East India Company in China; Mr. Herbert Compton's *Master Mariner*; and, last but not least, of the incomparable *Memoirs* of William Hickey (Hurst and Blackett).

Of more modern authors, Mr. E. Keble Chatterton has treated the subject at length in his *Old East Indiamen* (Werner Laurie, 1914), but his book is out of print and already difficult to procure.[1] Mr. David Hannay has a chapter on 'Indiamen' in his *Ships and Men* (Blackwood, 1910) and has more to say about them in his later book on *The Great Chartered Companies* (Williams and Norgate, 1926). Another chapter will be found in Mr. R. S. Holland's *Historic Ships*, a lightly written American book (Fisher Unwin, 1927). But nothing is contained in these books that I have not myself gathered from original sources. They are mentioned in order to complete the bibliography.

EVAN COTTON

[1] A revised edition was published in 1933 by Rich and Cowan. This statement was probably written before that year.

Editor's Addition

IN DEALING with the London East India Company's early efforts in the seventeenth century to obtain a share in the Dutch spice trade, David Hannay points out[1] the importance this had in laying the foundation of the British empire in India.

His remarks also apply aptly to East Indiamen. If Warren Hastings and his successors could dominate all India, they owed their opportunity to the captains and sailors of the East India Company's ships which brought them to the shores of that country. These formed an indispensable link in the connection between Great Britain and the Indian continent, first of all for the purpose of the Company's trade, and later on for its administration of British India. The great dangers, difficulties and delays entailed in a journey to India by the overland route through Syria, Iraq and Persia are evident from accounts given by travellers using that means of access in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and the voyage to India round the Cape of Good Hope was a necessary substitute that equally tested the qualities both of the ships employed on it and of the men that sailed them. They had to face not only the peril of storm and tempest on the high seas, but also the risk of attacks by pirates, and in war-time those of enemy men-of-war or armed merchantmen and privateers. If lucky, they might have naval protection in the English Channel or on the voyage to or from St. Helena, but in Eastern waters they had generally to depend on their own armaments and the fighting qualities of their officers and sailors.

[1] *Great Chartered Companies*, p. 114.

They were an essential, and (as it turned out) a strong, life-line for the safety of the Company's trade and government.

The story of the organisation, work and adventures of this maritime service was naturally attractive to Sir Evan Cotton; and, busy though he was, he spent much time and energy on research into the subject. His accuracy has well stood the test of my comparison of sailing-dates and other details of the Indiamen he mentions with those given by Hardy's Register; and only a few minor corrections have been found necessary. Moreover, his extensive antiquarian and literary knowledge enabled him to give genealogical and other recondite information not readily available.

On the other hand the author's text is mainly confined to the years from about 1760 to 1835; and I have added to it in an endeavour to cover to some extent the earlier period of the East India Company's existence, and to give more of the history underlying some of the regulations he quotes. I have also amplified his brief mention of important events, such as the cessation of the Company's monopoly of trade with India and China, so as to bring out, I hope, more clearly, and yet succinctly, the gradual developments (including the main controversies) that affected the maritime service. In addition, two new chapters (III and IV) have been inserted, the first being mainly intended to show what the Indiaman's sailors thought about their conditions of service in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and the other giving a brief history of the Company's striped flag. Chapter VI has also been considerably extended. Except in the case of the two new chapters, additions to the author's text are shown in square brackets, so far as this can conveniently be done; the same applies to additions to the author's footnotes which are marked with an asterisk, to distinguish them from the editor's. Though Sir Evan contemplated dropping such of them as merely quoted an authority for a statement in the text, his manuscript is not consistent on the point: they were cut out in chapters I and II, but he reverted to them in the later part. In the

circumstances I have deemed it best to keep all his notes, and to add to them where further elucidation seemed desirable.

I have also purposely given authorities[2] for statements in the text on a more ample scale than would otherwise be necessary, in the hope that they will be useful to research students or others who may seek further information on a particular point. There is considerable scope for such investigation, and a mass of material for it is available in the East India Company's records lying in the former India Office.[3] My work on them has, however, shown me how necessary it is to have some name, date, or similar clue in searching for the information required; otherwise it is like looking for a needle in a haystack.

The list of books at p. 11 has been extended and short names provided for citation in footnotes.

Sir Evan Cotton proposed to call the work 'The Sea Services of the East India Company,' but instead the subsidiary title 'The East India Company's Maritime Service' has been adopted as more appropriate. That was what the Company itself ordinarily called it,[4] in contradistinction to its 'Marine Service' — the naval one that started at Bombay early in the seventeenth century and later became the Indian Navy (see pp. 21, 107 *post*).

I am grateful to Professor Philips for his Foreword, as well as for the assistance and encouragement he has given me over my additions and notes. His book, *The East India Company*, 1784–1834 has greatly helped me. Sir William Foster's notebooks in the Records department of the late India Office have been most helpful in tracing orders of the Court of Directors. I am also indebted to Mr. J. R. Lloyd, Superintendent of the Records in that branch of the Com-

[2] Though Hardy's Register is not usually cited, it has been consulted as the main authority in regard to ships in the Company's service.

[3] Now part of the Commonwealth Relations Office in King Charles Street, S.W.1.

[4] cf. the last line in H. A. C. Hardy's letter of 23 February 1811, at p. iv of Hardy's Register, ed. 1820; Chatterton, p. 194; Hannay, *Ships and Men*, pp. 119, 127; and p. 21 *post*.

monwealth Relations Office for material help of the same kind. Mrs. Parker, the daughter of Sir Evan Cotton, has assisted me with information as to the family, and the papers of a previous draft of the manuscript.

My acknowledgments are further due to the executors of the late Basil Lubbock, and Messrs. Hurst & Blackett, the publishers of *Barlow's Journal*, and to them also as the publishers of *Hickey's Memoirs*, to Messrs. William Blackwood and Sons, the publishers of David Hannay's *Ships and Men;* also to Messrs. Robert MacLehose & Co., who published *Knox*'s *Ceylon*, the copyright of which is now owned by Messrs. Jackson, Son & Co., for their kind permission to use material from those books in chapter III.

I have appended to the list of illustrations an acknowledgment of the sources to which I am indebted, and wish to add my appreciation of the co-operation received from the respective owners.

Oxford CHARLES FAWCETT
March, 1949.

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N.B. Except in the case of five entries where the abbreviations refer to the book itself, the footnotes usually cite a work merely by its author's surname. Where the name of the writer is indicated in the text, *Travels* is sometimes the citation for Macdonald and Twining, *Memoirs* for Forbes and Hickey, and *Voyage* for Grose.

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS IN FOOTNOTES

App.	Appendix	I.O.	India Office
		Ind.	Indian
Co.	Company		
Ct.	Court	Mar. R.	Marine Records
		Misc.	Miscellaneous
Dict.	Dictionary		
		N.R.S.	Navy Records Society
Enc. Brit.	Encyclopaedia Britannica (14th edn.).	O.C.	Original Correspondence
F.R.	Factory Records		
		P.R.O.	Public Record Office
G.R.	General Records		

CHAPTER ONE

The Men and their Ships

THE MARITIME SERVICE of the East India Company must at the outset be sharply differentiated from the Bombay Marine, the navy of the Company, created to protect its trade against pirates on the coasts of Malabar and Mekran, in the Persian Gulf, and in the Red Sea. The 'Bombay Buccaneers,' as the King's officers called them, came to an end in 1830: and of their distinguished record nothing will here be said.[1] Our business is with the Indiamen, and with their captains and officers who corresponded to the covenanted civilians ashore. The like of such a mercantile service will be sought in vain at any period of time or in any country.[2] Their ships went armed and were not afraid to take the offensive, as well as the defensive, when occasion required. The officers wore uniform and were entitled to carry swords. When the captain of an Indiaman landed at any of the Company's settlements he was received with a salute of thirteen guns. His rank on shore was that of a Member of Council, and the guard would turn out whenever he entered or left the Fort. The commo-

[1] A full account of the Bombay Marine is given in Lieut. C. R. Low's *History of the Indian Navy*. For a brief one see Admiral Richmond's notice of it in the *Asiatic Review* for Oct. 1940, pp. 698–700.

[2] For similar praise cf. Hannay, *The Great Chartered Companies*, p. 245; *Ships and Men*, p. 122; Chatterton pp. 3, 5, 154, 308; Eastwick, p. 60. But in the seventeenth century the Dutch East India Company may be said to have equalled, if it did not often surpass, that of the English one (*Great Chartered Companies*, pp. 170, 175–6); and it was only after the fusion of the 'Old' and 'New' companies in 1708 that the East India Company entered on its career of unchallenged supremacy in the Indian trade (Fayle, pp. xiv, xxxi-ii), a process that was completed by the bankruptcy and later disappearance of the Dutch Company in the eighteenth century.

dore, or senior commander, was entitled to hoist the broad pennant; and in Eastern seas, where the Company's monoply ran, their ships flew their own flag which was composed of red and white lateral stripes with (in the upper corner next the staff) the red cross of St. George on a white field till 1707, and, in that and later years, bearing the Union Jack instead. According to our view, this flag as flown from 1707 till 1775 was the prototype of the stars and stripes of the United States of America, and the resemblance is certainly striking. But a more probable origin is the coat of arms of the Washington family.[3]

The Service was in every sense of the words a *corps d'élite*. Many regarded it as superior to the Royal Navy. James Rennell, the great geographer, who found his way to the East as a midshipman on H.M.S. *America*, and served under Captain Hyde Parker in H.M.S. *Grafton* on the East Indies station, writes 'from Bengall' on 30 August 1766:[4]

> 'Of the two Services I should prefer the India Service for a Boy at his first going to Sea. He has there less chance of being corrupted than in the Navy where there is such a parcel of idle young Fellows in every Ship: he will also probably make a swifter progress in learning his Duty and will be much closer overlooked by the Captain, or whoever has charge of him, than the nature of the other Service will allow.
>
> 'I think I see many more Advantages arising from his being bred up in the India Service preferable to the Navy. After he becomes Master of his Business he can still choose which Service he will follow. The officers of India Ships are known to be in general thoroughbred seamen and are seldom refused preference in the Navy after being a very short time in it. Supposing him a Lieut. at the conclusion of a Peace, he will be received into the India Service preferable to an officer brought up in the Navy.'

In an earlier letter written 'on board H.M.S. *America*, Spithead,' on 28 February 1760, he says:

[3] The history of the Company's striped flag is given in chap. iv, *post*. Washington's coat of arms is the only one of many suggested origins, without any conclusive evidence in their favour.

[4] In 1764 Rennell was appointed a Surveyor under the Company's government in Bengal (Col. Phillimore, *Historical Records, Survey of India*, edn. 1945, i.371.

'One of our Midshipmen went last week to pass for a Lieut. He not having a great deal of interest was turn'd back upon a very trifling Acct. Next day he went to the East India Company, gave them an Acct. of it, and desired to pass his examination for a Mate, which he did, and was immediately sent on board one of the outward-bound as 2nd Mate. That Station I am sure is far preferable to any Lieut.'s Station and whoever is capable of acting in one is also of the other.'[5]

Under the 'qualifications established by the Honourable Court of Directors' on 24 January 1804,[6] it was required that the commander of a 'regular ship' shall have attained the full age of twenty-five years and shall have performed a voyage to and from India or China in the Company's regular service as chief or second officer, or commanded a ship in the 'extra service.' A fourth mate was required before appointment to have attained the full age of twenty years and performed one voyage to and from India or China in the Company's service of not less than twenty months: or, alternatively, one such shorter voyage in the Company's service and one year in actual service in any other employ. For the 'extra ships' the qualifications were slightly different, and the limit of age was lower: twenty-three years for a commander and the performance of three voyages to and from India or China in the Company's service, of which one must have been in the station of chief officer of an 'extra ship,' or first or second officer in a 'regular ship.' The third mate must have attained the age of twenty (instead of twenty-one) and have performed one voyage as an officer in the Company's service or two

[5] These letters are to be seen in manuscript at the India Office (Home Misc. No. 765). They are mostly addressed to his guardian the Rev. Gilbert Burrington, Vicar of Chudleigh, Devon.

[6] See Hardy, edn. 1820, App., pp. 11–13. Prior orders, going back to 1768 (in the case of commanders) and to 1783 (in that of mates) are compiled in Marine Records, Misc., No. 644. They are on the lines of those of 1804, with slight variations, mainly as to the voyages to be performed. In 1787 an oral examination of applicants for posts of fourth mate, to be held by the master attendant in the presence of members of the Shipping Committee, was introduced, and in 1795–6 this was extended to third mates. It started with fourth mates because these were the lowest officers who took an oath of fidelity to the Company, and so entered its regular hierarchy (Parkinson, p. 192).

voyages as midshipman in the 'extra service.' The performance of a voyage in these smaller, or 'extra,' ships carried eligibility for the like stations in the regular service: and any person completing a voyage to and from India or China in an 'extra ship' was considered to have made a voyage in the Company's service.

In 1791 it was ordered that each ship of 750 to 800 tons register should carry a crew of 101, of whom fifty were to be foremast men, i.e., able seamen. The officers comprised a commander, six mates (including the chief officer), a surgeon and a surgeon's mate,[7] a purser, a midshipman-coxswain and four midshipmen. The petty officers were the boatswain, gunner, and carpenter. Servants were allotted to the commander (who was allowed two), the chief officer and the second mate, the surgeon, and the three petty officers. There were also six quartermasters, a sailmaker, a caulker, a cooper, two boatswain's mates, two gunner's mates, two carpenter's mates, a cooper's mate, a caulker's mate, an armourer, a butcher, a poulterer, a baker, a captain's cook, a ship's cook, a captain's steward, and a ship's steward. For a ship of 900 tons register the complement was 110, for a ship of 1,000 tons 120, for a ship of 1,100 tons 125, and for a ship of 1,200 or 1,300 tons 130. Five 'supernumeraries' were allowed: two of these were 'permitted to walk the quarter-deck,' but the other three must be foremast men.[8] When Captain R. W. Eastwick (whose adventures have been edited by Mr. Herbert Compton in his *Master Mariner*) joined the *Barwell* Indiaman (Captain Thomas Welladvice) in 1792 as fifth mate, the four other mates and the surgeon and purser were, he says (p. 60), 'all gentlemen by education and family.'

The usual routine, before a command could be obtained,

[7] In Oct. 1708, rules were laid down as to the appointment of surgeons and their duties. In 1769 it was ordered that their qualifications should be examined by a Physician in the presence of two directors at Surgeon's Hall, according to the practice of the Navy (Marine Records, Misc., No. 644); and later on diplomas had to be produced by candidates (Hardy, App., p. 122; Chatterton, p. 223)

[8] Hardy, App., pp. 88–9; Parkinson, pp. 211–2.



1 Uniforms of Officers in the Company's service, 1829 (*see* p. 29).
From David Hannay's Ships and Men *by courtesy of Messrs. William Blackwood & Sons.*



2 John Dean, sailor in the *Sussex*, 1738 (*see* p. 132).
By courtesy of National Portrait Gallery.

was to make a first voyage as fifth or sixth mate, then a second as third or fourth, and finally a third voyage as second mate or chief officer.[9] In early days the actual owner of the ship, who was termed the 'ship's husband', would 'sell the ship,' on completion to the captain to whom he offered it, and would often obtain as much as £8,000 or £10,000. After the sale, the command became the transferable property of the captain who had bought it, and, if and when he desired to resign, he was considered to have an undoubted right to sell the command to the highest bidder. If he died, the same right passed to his heirs. The practice was, however, abolished in 1796 as it was found to enhance the rates of freight paid by the Company: and, says Eastwick, 'after this it became out of the power of money for a person deficient in the qualifications requisite for the situation to obtain the command of a ship, although previously such persons had often held the appointments.'[10]

The selection of the commander and the officers continued to rest with the 'ship's husband': and the choice was not always dictated by merit, as the following story, which is told by William Hickey in the first volume of his Memoirs (pp. 146–49), will show. The *Plassey* belonged in 1768 almost entirely to Mr. John Durand, who had made a large fortune as captain of a 'country ship.'[11] The chief officer, John Waddell, had succeeded to the command on the death of the commander, William Peters, at Bencoolen,[12] and had brought the ship home, the second officer, Samuel Rogers, acting as chief officer, and the third mate, Peter Douglas, as second. When the *Plassey* was taken up for a fresh voyage to Madras and China, Durand put in Charles Chisholme as second officer, telling Captain Waddell, in

[9] cf. Eastwick, p. 44.

[10] Ibid., pp. 41–2 Chatterton, p. 129; Philips, pp. 83–6; Parkinson, pp. 178–84. The history of the matter up to 1796 is summarised by Milburn, I, lxxvii–lxxx.

[11] 'Country Ships' were those which plied between port and port in the Eastern seas. Durand was member for Seaford (Cinque Ports) from 1780 to 1784.

[12] A settlement on the West coast of Sumatra, which belonged to England from 1685 to 1824. The Company had a factory there, which from 1712 was called Fort Marlborough.

answer to his protests, that he had been 'applied to from a quarter of so much weight and such importance to his own interest that he could not refuse, even if he had to turn out his own son.' An appeal to the Court of Directors proved fruitless, and Chisholme was sworn in as second officer, although Captain Waddell, while admitting that 'it undoubtedly was in Mr. Durand's power to deprive him of the command of the ship,' refused to accept him as such. Chisholme, however, sailed as second officer, and Douglas as third: and the captain marked his displeasure by giving command of a watch to Douglas, inviting him to a seat at his table, and allotting him 'a much larger space than he was entitled to for his cabin.' In the second volume of his *Memoirs* (p. 172), Hickey records another instance of Mr. Durand's partiality. His son, John Durand, junior, was in 1777 put in command of the *Northington* 'although not quite twenty-one years of age.' The ship had been commanded on her three previous voyages (1767–68; 1770–71; 1773–74) by John Sealy, the brother of Charles Sealy, the last Registrar of the Mayor's Court at Calcutta, and great-grandfather of the First Earl of Northbrook, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1872–76.

We come across Peter Douglas again in the second and third volumes of Hickey's *Memoirs*. He had obtained command of the *Queen* in March 1776, and retained it until May 1792. In the opening chapter of the fourth volume (pp. 2, 5) it is recorded that he got into trouble for refusing to transport troops from Calcutta to Madras for the first Mysore campaign, and was compelled to ship three hundred head of cattle instead, under penalty of losing his command and being sent as a prisoner to England. 'So much for kicking against authority,' says Hickey. Later on in the same volume (p. 272) we learn that, having acquired a handsome fortune, he became 'a Bond Street lounger' and the husband of 'a smart young wife': and that he was carried off by a fit of apoplexy in 1801. He was evidently one of those who knew how to make himself comfortable on

board ship, for Hickey (I. 121) has given us the following description of Douglas's cabin on board the *Plassey* in 1769:

> 'It was painted of a light pea green, with gold beading; the bed and curtains of the richest Madras chintz, one of the most complete dressing-tables I ever saw, having every useful article in it: a beautiful bureau and book-case stored with the best books, and three neat mahogany chairs, formed the furniture.'

In striking contrast to the dandified Douglas was Samuel Rogers, the chief officer of the *Plassey*, who was of American birth and who, from his dark complexion and rough manners, was known as 'Black Sam' and 'Blackguard Sam'. His language was invariably embellished with oaths, and he chewed tobacco in large quantities. Yet, says Hickey (I. 143), there never existed a better hearted man or a more zealous friend: and in his profession he could not be surpassed. He came out to Calcutta in December 1778 in command of the *Osterley*, which was owned by his uncle, William Dent, and took home Daniel Barwell (younger brother of the well-known member of the Supreme Council) in the following February: but he had the ill-luck off the Mauritius to fall in with a large French privateer which brought his ship into Port Louis of that island as a prize.[13] Hickey met him in London in 1780 (he had stopped in the street to look at a boxing match between a hackney coachman and a catman), and in the March following he sailed for the East and China in command of a new and larger *Osterley*; but he handed her over in July 1786 to his chief officer, Joseph Clarkson.[14] His name then disappeared from the list of the Company's commanders.

The uniform of the captain of an Indiaman was not showy. It could not compare with that of the captain of a Dutch East Indiaman, who received his commission from the States-General and wore the uniform of the Netherlands Navy — a blue coat with scarlet facings, a richly

[13] Hickey, II, 139, 140; Hardy, p. 76.
[14] Hickey, II, 269, 281; Hardy, pp. 88, 105, 119.

laced waistcoat, and scarlet breeches.[15] But it was thoroughly in keeping with the dignity of his office. [As first introduced in 1781,[16] a commander's dress suit consisted of a blue coat with blue lapels and a light gold embroidery, white waistcoat, and white breeches, with buttons of yellow metal, engraved with the Company's crest. His undress suit was similar, omitting the lapels and embroidery. The other officers wore a blue coat, with lapels and buttons like those of a commander, white waistcoat and breeches. It was found however, that these so closely resembled the naval uniform of blue and white that the Company's officers were sometimes mistaken for those of His Majesty's service with consequent inconvenience, so in June 1787 the Court of Directors took away the coat-lapels and substituted crimson waistcoats and breeches for the previous white ones.[17] This obviously aggrieved the Company's commanders, headed by Captain John Cotton, and their representations resulted in the Directors restoring the lapels, which, with the cuffs and collar, were to be in black velvet, while the waistcoat and breeches became deep buff; the embroidery remained also, but was to be 'as little expensive as may be.'[18]] These orders formed the basis of the revised rules issued by the Court of Directors on 27 May 1818,[19] whereby a captain's 'dress suit' became a blue coat with black velvet lapels, cuffs and collar, brightened by 'a light gold embroidery as little expensive as may be'; a deep buff waistcoat and buff breeches; buttons of yellow metal with the Company's crest; a cocked hat, side arms (to be worn under the coat) and a black stock. His 'undress' was a blue coat with black collar and cuffs, but without lapels; deep buff waistcoat and breeches; and yellow metal buttons. Similar

[15] Hickey, II, 224.

[16] Ct. Books, 4 April 1781, vol. LXXXIX, p. 764.

[17] Ct. Books, 29 June 1787, vol. XCVI, pp. 230-2.

[18] Ct. Books, 22 August 1787, vol. XCVI, p. 380.

[19] Ct. Books, 27 May 1818, vol. CVI, p. 204, laying down new rules recommended by the Committee of Shipping (Marine Records, Misc., vol. XXXII, pp. 113–6, 138), and reproduced by Hardy, App., pp. 109–10. For various slight modifications between 1787 and 1818, see Marine Records, Misc., No. 644.

uniforms were worn by the officers. The chief officer was distinguished by one small button on each cuff, and the second, third and fourth officers by the corresponding number of buttons.[20] The rules from 1781 onwards ordained that 'commanders shall appear in their dress uniforms when attending the Court of Directors upon any occasion, and in their undress uniforms when attending the Committee of Shipping at India House. Officers were enjoined 'always to appear in their uniforms.' Finally, commanders were instructed that neither they nor their officers were 'upon any account to appear in boots, or black breeches and stockings.'[21]

The official scale of pay was in no way commensurate with the uniform. Under those in force in 1813 a commander received £10 per month: the chief officer £5, the second mate £4, the third mate £3 10s., the fourth mate £2 10s., the fifth and sixth mates £2 5s., the surgeon £5, his mate £3 10s.[22] the purser £2, the boatswain and the gunner £3 10s., the carpenter £4 10s., the midshipmen £2 5s., the caulker £3 15s., the cooper £3, the captain's cook £3 5s., the ship's cook £2 10s., the captain's steward £2, the ship's steward, the boatswain's mates and the gunner's mates £2 10s., the carpenter's first mate £3 5s., his second mate, the quartermasters, the cooper's mate, the sailmaker and the armourer, £2 10s., the caulker's mate £2 15s., the butcher, the baker and the poulterer, £2 5s., the commander's two servants £1 5s., the chief officer's servant £1, the second mate's servant 18s., the servants of

[20] For a picture of a commander's and chief officer's uniforms in 1829, see illustration facing p. 24. By that time blue trousers had superseded buff breeches in the case of the chief mate (cf. Parkinson, p. 378).

*[21] [Boots were first prohibited in 1809, and the wearing of crape on the arm, instead of black breeches and stockings, first allowed in 1809, was authorised for mourning in 1816]. Undergraduates at Oxford in the eighteenth century were likewise 'bound to refrain from the absurd and extravagant habit of wearing boots': *see* Brasenose College Quater-centenary Monographs, No. xiii, vol. II, p. 42, in Oxford Historical Society, vol. LIII.

[22] In Dec. 1780 the pay of a surgeon was increased from £3 5s. to £5, and that of his mate from £2 5s. to £2 10s. a month. In 1807 the mate's pay was raised to £3 10s. (Marine Records, Misc., No. 644).

the surgeon, boatswain, gunner and carpenter 15s., and each foremast man £2 5s.[23]

Little alteration was made in these rates,[24] and the real and substantial attractions of the service lay elsewhere, in the shape of 'encouragements' and 'indulgences.' The 'encouragements' were detailed in a printed form which was hung up in a conspicuous place in each ship. Among those appearing after the union of the two Companies in 1709 a reward was promised 'in proportion to their merits' to all seamen who, whether in peace or in war, prevented 'malicious damage to the Company's effects.' The widow, children, or parents of any seaman killed in the defence of a ship or drowned in its service, received £30 and the same sum was given for the loss of an arm or leg, or both. Wounds were cured 'at the charge of the Company and owners'; and such compensation was paid 'as the Directors might think fit' on production of a certificate from the commanding officer.[25] By service for at least eight years and regular subscription to what was known as the Poplar Fund,[26] pensions were obtainable. In the case of officers the amount depended on the capital possessed. If a commander, after serving for eight years and regularly contributing, did not possess £2,500, or £125 a year, he was entitled to a pension of £100; and at the other end of the

[23] The last rate of £2 5s. was fixed only after war with France restarted in 1803 (Parkinson, p. 234). Previously from the end of the seventeenth century the Company had paid an able seaman £1 15s. a month, as against £1 3s. given him in the navy (Hannay, *The Sea Trader*, p. 289); and in 1670–4 the monthly wage was only £1 2s. (see p. 81 *post*). An Act of 1740 (14 Geo. 2, cap. 38, sec. 4) in fact prohibited seamen in the merchant service from receiving more pay than 25s. a month, except under a previous contract, or if employed to overseas ports.

[24] Under the rates shown by Hardy in his edition of 1820 there is a reduction of 5s. and even 10s., in some cases. For a comparison between rates in 1700 and 1800, see Hannay, *Ships and Men*, pp. 127–8, and for rates of pay about 1670 see Marine Records, Misc. No. 14, entries showing the advances ('impress') of two month's wages.

[25] Hannay, *Ships and Men*, p. 131. It was in consideration of these arrangements by the Company that officers and seamen employed by the Company were under an Act of 1734 (20 Geo. 3, cap. 37) exempted from paying the sum of 6d. a month levied from other seamen for contribution to Greenwich Hospital.

[26] The Poplar Fund was connected with the Company's Hospital at Poplar, for the history of which see Foster, *John Company*, chap. IX, and pp. 168–9 as to the Fund.

scale a midshipman who was not worth £400 or £20 a year, might receive a pension of £12. Allowances, similarly ranking from £80 to £4 a year, were also granted to the widows and orphans of those who had served the Company for seven years.[27]

The opportunities afforded by the 'indulgence' of private trade were, however, so great that an officer must be unlucky indeed if he did not amass a comfortable competence.

[As to this, conditions varied from time to time. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century the amount of private trade that the Company permitted to commanders, officers and seamen, was so restricted that they could gain such a competence only by illicit trading. In 1674 for instance the total quantity allowed them was five tons outwards and five per cent of the ship's tonnage on the return journey; and for any excess they had to pay freight at '£13 6s. 8d. a ton as stated damages for overtonnage.'[28] In addition, commanders had to give an undertaking on oath not to trade 'to, in, or from India' beyond the indulgence allowed.[29] In September 1694 a charter of King William III expressly authorised the Company to license private trade in the East Indies for commanders, officers and seamen employed in its ships, and said the extent of such trade and the nature of the commodities in which it could be carried on, were to be laid down in regulations passed by its General Court. These continued to regulate the quantity of goods allowed to be exported or imported for this purpose by bulk, or the tonnage they took up in the ship, and not by their value; and the tonnage allowed was gradually increased. In 1772 it had risen to twenty-five

[27] These rates are according to the scale laid down in Court Minutes of 9 April 1800 and shown in the 1813 edn. of Hardy, App., pp., 131–3. This was amended by Court Minutes of 7 April 1813, as well as of 29 April 1814, on consideration of recommendations of a special Committee whose report is contained in Marine Records, Misc., vol. xxv, pp. 39, 40. The result is shown in the 1820 edn. of Hardy, App., pp. 126–8. It allows much the same pensions, but is more liberal in some of them and in raising the amount of capital or income that barred the award of one.

[28] Minutes of 19 February 1674, in *Ct. Min.* 1674–76, pp. 54–5; Minutes of 17 October 1679, in *Ct. Min.* 1677–79, p. 303.

[29] I.O. List of Marine Records, p. xv.

tons for the outward voyage, and fifteen tons homeward; and in 1791–2 it was raised from eighty-seven to ninety-two tons.[30] By then it was well known that the private trade of commanders, etc., to and from India considerably exceeded, both in tonnage and value, the amount of 'privilege' granted by the Company.[31] and the ship's officers were also helped by a large allowance of wine, beer, cheese and other provisions for a voyage, the surplus of which could be disposed of at a profit in the East.[32] In 1796, when the system of 'hereditary bottoms' and the sale of commands were abolished, the commander's oath was altered to one requiring him to be generally 'true and faithful' to the Company, and they and other mariners were authorised to carry on a limited trade on their own account up to a maximum of ninety-nine tons in a ship. On the other hand, as a part-recompense for this concession, every commander was required to pay £500 to the Company on his return from each voyage; but this tax was removed in 1813, when the East India trade was thrown open to private competition.[33] The large 'indulgence' shown by the rules reproduced in Hardy's Register, therefore, mainly operated from 1796.] It may be true, as Captain Eastwick says,[34] that it required private capital of at least £500 to enable a junior officer below the rank of second mate to 'carry on'; but there was a proper schedule of 'indulgences,' and even a midshipman on a ship hired for 755 tons or upwards was entitled to one quarter of a ton of the cargo space for his 'private investment.'[35] The proportion allowed on 'privilege'

[30] I.O. List of Marine Records, p. xiii; E. I. Papers, Reports, pp. 8, 25, 70; Macpherson, p. 149; charter of 28 Sept. 1694 in the compilation of the Company's Charters. This provision became necessary because a clause in his charter of 10 Sept. 1693, prohibiting the Company from licensing any person whatsoever to trade in the East Indies, was too sweeping in its terms.

[31] E.I. Papers, Reports, pp. 7, 8, 10.

[32] Hardy, 1820, App., pp. 83–4; Hannay *Ships and Men*, pp. 132–3; Parkinson, pp. 201, 231.

[33] List of Marine Records, p. xv.

[34] *A Master Mariner*, p. 44.

[35] Midshipmen, however, would not ordinarily indulge in trade, and the captain's might occupy the space allowed them, cf. Parkinson, p.200.

varied according to rank. Out of the ninety-six tons authorised on an outward voyage in ships of 755 tons or upwards, fifty-six were allotted to the commander, eight tons to the first mate, six tons each to the second mate and the surgeon, three tons to the purser, and one and a half ton to the six quartermasters; the stewards and the captain's cook had also their share.[36] The investment of the ship's steward of the *Kent* in 1800 consisted of 'some prime articles of saddlery, likewise the best London-made shoes and boots.' Such articles, it was said,[37] 'always yielded a hundred per cent in Bengal.' Moreover, in voyages between ports in the East, two-fifths of the tonnage was granted as 'indulgence,' and if the Company had no occasion to use the other three-fifths, the officers and men were permitted to bid for the vacant space.[38] Almost anything might be shipped: but vessels from India might not carry tea, china-ware, raw silk, or nankeen cloth: nor might ships from China take raw silk, musk, camphor, arrack, arsenic and other poisonous drugs.[39]

By this means the Calcutta shops[40] were kept stocked with 'Europe goods,' such as millinery and madeira, claret and cutlery, perfumes and glass-ware. When the *Ravensworth* anchored at Kedgeree[41] in October 1786, the ladies of the

[36] The original rules of 1796 were made by Court Minutes of 27 September. These were revised in Court Minutes of 8 March 1805, see Ct. Books, vol. CXIIIa, p. 1602. On the homeward voyage from India, the privilege was scaled down some 25 to 50 per cent on account of the Company's goods taking up more space (Hardy, edn. 1820, App., pp. 18–9; Parkinson, p. 202).

[37] Hickey, IV, 245.

[38] In 1789 the Company also decided to allow the commanders and officers to fill, freight-free, all such outward tonnage as 'might' be 'unoccupied' by 'the Company' (E.I. Papers, Reports, pp. 7, 70).

[39] Hardy, edn. 1820, App., pp. 79, 132–3.

[40] Also those at Madras (Dodwell, *The Nabobs of Madras*, pp. 2–3; Love, III, 449–50) and Bombay (Mrs. Postans, *Facts and Fancies*, II, 59–60; Douglas, I, 188).

[41] Kedgeree (writes Maria Graham, in her *Journal of a Residence in India*, under date of 26 December 1810) 'is half way between Calcutta and Saugor, where the Hooghly widens to a bason which forms the harbour. Here is a bazar and village, where a company's naval officer is stationed, who makes a daily report to Government of the ships arriving in and sailing out of the river. It is not uncommon for ships to lie here a long time in the rainy season, when the tides are not strong enough to influence the river against the *freshes* or floods occasioned by the rains. A little

(*Continued on p. 34*)

settlement discovered that both Captain Collingwood Roddam and his purser, Mr. John Burdekin, had remembered them. For the following advertisement met their eyes in the Calcutta Gazette[42] of 2 November.

MRS FAY[43]

Respectfully gives notice that Capt. Roddam and Mr. Burdekin's investments of Haberdashery are exposed for sale this day.

Also a complete assortment of Millinery from Madame Beauvois, which has not yet been opened on account of the rains.

N.B. In the above are two very elegant suits of mourning.

Post Office Street, 26 October, 1786.

On 22 June of the same year, Mrs. Creighton and Miss Tranter beg leave to acquaint the ladies of the settlement that they have purchased the whole of the millinery and haberdashery contained in the investment of Mr. Thomas Denton, chief officer of the *Phoenix* (Captain James Rattray), which sailed from the Downs on 16 January 1786, and reached her moorings in the river Hooghly on 30 May. 'The Millinery chiefly consists of most superb suits of dresses of the latest fashion, a variety of the most fashionable dress and undress caps, hats, turbans, etc.: and the whole has been put up by Madame Beauvois.' As this enterprising chief officer married Miss Mercy Evans at St. John's Church a few months later — on 22 October 1786 — we may suppose that the match was made on board ship, and indulge in the hope that some at least of the millinery was reserved for the bride. On 4 May in the same

(*Continued from p* 33)

farther towards the mouth of the river is Diamond Harbour an unhealthy station, and which has none of the conveniences of Kedgeree.' [For further information about Kedgeree, Saugor, and Diamond Harbour, see *Hobson-Jobson*, s.v. those places, and Henry Yule, *Diary of William Hedges*, III, 206–7.]

[42] The *Calcutta Gazette* was a newspaper started in February 1784 under the avowed patronage of the government (Busteed, p. 183).

[43] i.e., Eliza Fay, the writer of the well-known letters (dated 1779–82). She had returned to Calcutta in 1784 and set up a millinery establishment, which failed in 1788. For her later visit to Calcutta in 1804, see Sir William Foster's article 'More about Mrs. Fay,' in *Bengal, Past and Present*, XXXIII, 8–11.

year, the investment of Captain Robert Taylor of the *Earl Talbot* was advertised for sale. It consisted of a varied assortment of liquors — claret, 'red port,' madeira, old hock, porter, cyder, ale, 'pale beer,' rum, and gin — pine-apple cheese, pickles, confectionery, hardware, hats, jewellery, plate, perfumery, haberdashery, cutlery, fishing tackle, and prints of 'droll and political characters.' The eatables would always include cheese, hams, tongues, and Scotch and French barley. Hickey (III. 204) records that in the spring of 1784, ham and cheese were selling in Calcutta at five sicca (i.e. newly-coined) rupees, or twelve shillings and sixpence, a pound.

Charles Chisholme, whom we have already met as second officer of the *Plassey*, came out to Calcutta in the autumn of 1778 in command of the *Gatton* and brought as his 'investment' a large pack of hounds, 'then in great demand by the Bengal sportsmen,' and likewise 150 pipes of madeira. As the supply of madeira was so plentiful that it was selling at sixty per cent below the prime cost, he instructed his purser to give notice that any person taking four pipes at three hundred rupees a pipe would be entitled to two couple of hounds at the market price. By this ingenious device, he disposed both of the wine and of the hounds at a profit of upwards a hundred per cent. Unhappily for him, he was attacked by inflammation of the lungs on the homeward journey, as the result of exposure to severe weather off Madagascar, and died on the day the ship reached St. Helena.[44] Robert Lindsay (son of the fifth Earl of Balcarres), who went out on board the *Prince of Wales* Indiaman in the spring of 1772 to take up a writership in Bengal, mentions that his commander, Captain Jonathan Court, had also a pack of foxhounds on board, which being valuable animals were provided with their usual allowance of water while the passengers were put

[44] Hickey, III, 214–6, which puts the arrival of *Gatton* as taking place in June 1784. Hardy, pp. 78, 102–4, however, shows that this is a mistake, and that the incident occurred in the autumn of 1778 when the *Gatton* arrived, or that his recollection erred in saying that the hounds came out in the *Gatton*.

on short commons. A strong remonstrance was made but it was disregarded: 'We then determined to lodge a complaint against him upon our landing' at the Cape, but 'on approaching the shore he thought it prudent to make an ample apology, and all was forgotten.'[45]

The value of the 'private trade' was great. To take one commodity alone: in the season of 1805 it amounted from Canton to London to $1\frac{1}{4}$ millions of tea out of a total of $23\frac{1}{4}$ millions.[46] But disappointment sometimes awaited the 'investor.' When the *Plassey* reached Madras in May, 1769, the whole of the fleet that had left the Downs with her came in within the space of ten days. This brought so great and sudden a supply of European articles as to overstock the market, and in consequence there were no purchasers for many of the investments. The commanders and officers were therefore, says Hickey (I. 179–80) who was on board, under the disagreeable necessity of disposing of what they had at a loss of forty per cent upon the prime cost of the goods in England, and several at a still greater discount. Glassware in particular, of which there was an immense quantity from that article having been much enquired for the year before, sold at a loss of sixty per cent. [Another instance occurred in 1789. In November of that year a petition was presented by the commanders of ships from Bengal, Madras and Bombay, for themselves and their officers, complaining that, as the markets in India had been overstocked, they had suffered, in many cases almost to the extent of ruin, by the sale of their investments from Europe. They prayed for remission of the duties levied in India on them, and this was granted.[47]]

As a general rule, however, the speculations were successful: and jealous guard was kept upon the 'privilege' both by the Company and by the captains and officers who

[45] *Lives of the Lindsays* (1840), IV, 10–11.

[46] cf. Morse, III, 59, as to private trade in the seasons 1806 and 1807 being about eight per cent of the Company's trade.

[47] E.I. Papers, First Report, p. 8.

benefited by it. In 1806 we find the Directors communicating to the Governor and Council at Bombay their decision that Captain Luke Dodds, the commander of the *Walmer Castle*, a 1,200-ton Indiaman belonging to John Pascall Larkins, is to be deprived of 'the usual privilege of carrying freight from Bombay to China on his own account' during the ensuing voyage, as the Court have 'reason to believe' that Captain Essex Henry Bond, the late commander, has 'reserved to himself an interest in the profits resulting to the commander.' In 1810 Joseph Williams, the second officer of the *Surat Castle* 'being entitled to a privilege of six tons' from Canton, is permitted by the Select Committee to sell the privilege to his commander, Captain Alexander Robertson, for £40 a ton.

Instances were known of a commander making no less than £30,000 out of the 'double voyage,' that is to say, from London to Bombay or Madras, and thence to China and home — an absence of eighteen months. These were, perhaps, exceptional cases: but it was quite usual for a single voyage to yield £8,000 to £10,000, and for three voyages of eighteen months to bring in £18,000.[48] When the Company lost its China trade monopoly in 1834, Captain John Innes of the *Abercrombie Robinson*, in a memorial for compensation for loss of his appointment, estimated his income as commander, upon an average of his last three voyages, exclusive of profits on investments, at £6,100 a voyage. His figures were as follows: eighteen months' pay at £10 a month, £180: fifty-six tons 'privilege' allowed, at £4 a ton, £224: from port to port at Rs.30 per candy, £336: homeward at £3 a ton, £1,484: two-fifths tonnage from port to port, 478 tons at Rs. 30 a candy,[49] less charged by the Hon'ble Company £2 a ton, £1,012:

[48] Thus Alexander Dalrymple's pamphlet replying to Anthony Brough (1786) says (p. 83) he had been assured by a late commander that the amount of his outward trade was £10,000. Similarly Eastwick (p. 44) puts the gains of a prudent commander about 1791 as averaging from £4,000 to £5,000 a voyage, sometimes perhaps falling as low as £2,000, but at other times rising to £10,000 and even £12,000.

[49] A candy is a weight used in Southern India which may be stated roughly as 500 lbs., or the equivalent of 20 maunds.

'privilege,' £100: passage-money after allowing for the provisions and stores provided for the passengers, £1,500.

In spite of these handsome profits, neither captains nor officers were averse upon occasion to a deal with smugglers. Hickey (I. 248–50) relates that, as the *Plassey* entered the Channel in April 1770 on her voyage home from China, she was met by a fine cutter of 150 tons burthen. An individual 'of a Herculean form, with a healthy ruby face' climbed on board the Indiaman from a small boat, and was conducted into the round house by Captain Waddell, who sold him his 'privilege' of some sixty chests of tea at £18 a chest. The smuggler then purchased the stocks of the different officers. Upon a Custom House schooner being spied to the southward, not more than four leagues distant from the Lizard, Captain Waddell desired the officer of the watch to brace the yards and keep the ship up a couple of points, in order to keep outside the prescribed limits. The schooner arrived, and had the mortification of seeing the tea removed to the cutter without being able to interfere. The smuggler finally took from his pocket book a cheque which he proceeded to draw for £1,224 in favour of the Captain upon Messrs. Walpole and Company, bankers, of Lombard Street. This was deposited by Captain Waddell 'with the utmost composure in his escritoire.' The officers were paid in guineas to the amount of upwards of eight hundred. Hickey enquired whether the captain 'felt secure in a draft for so large a sum,' whereupon Waddell replied that 'these people always deal with the strictest honour: if they did not, their business would cease.'[50]

Fortune, however, did sometimes favour the revenue authorities. Sir Edward Pellew, afterwards Lord Exmouth, was naval commander-in-chief in the East Indies from 1804

[50] In 1777 an Act (17 Geo. 3, cap. 41) was passed to prevent such clandestine unshipping of goods 'at any distance from the coasts of the United Kingdom.' On proof of the commander's complicity, he could be sued for treble the value of the goods taken off, and any vessel used for that purpose was to be forfeited; but unfortunately it did not empower the revenue officers to seize the offender, goods, or vessel, if caught *in flagrante delicto*.

to 1809, and (says Hickey)[51] completed the object of his voyage by making a handsome fortune. But he did not bring it all home. 'Contraband goods to the amount of several thousand pounds were seized by the Custom House officers on board his ship, the *Culloden*, a few days after her arrival at Plymouth from India.' Captain Peter Lawson of the *Lord Holland*[52] was equally unfortunate. In 1775 he purchased the command of the ship from Captain Fasham Nairne and sailed for St. Helena, Bencoolen and China on 7 January 1776. Hickey tells us (I. 214) that he carried out an investment of £30,000, and was very successful until his return from his second voyage in November, 1779. On arrival in the Channel, information was laid against him for smuggling, whereupon the whole of his goods was confiscated, and he was deprived of his command. Thereupon he purchased a French ship, the *Modeste*, and giving her the name of *Locko*, persuaded his former owner, Robert Williams,[53] a banker in Birchin Lane, to act again as ship's husband. The Directors seem to have forgiven Lawson, for he was accepted as captain and the ship was taken up for a voyage to the Coast and China, on which she sailed in March 1781. On his return he was again denounced for smuggling by one of his crew: and judgment was obtained against him by the Crown in the Court of Exchequer to the amount of nearly £100,000. According to the custom of the time, he avoided liability by escaping to India in a foreign ship and settled at Vizagapatam, where he prospered as a free merchant and where he died on 10 October 1820, at the age of seventy-six.

[51] *Memoirs*, IV, 122.

[52] Lawson married Elizabeth Sulivan, the sister of Richard Sulivan of the Madras Civil Service, who was created a baronet in 1804, and of Sir Benjamin Sulivan (1747–1810), one of the first judges of the Supreme Court at Madras.

[53] Robert Williams (1739–1814) was M.P. for Dorchester, and so also was his son Robert (1767–1847), who was a Director from 1809 to 1812. His brother Stephen Williams (1741–1805) married Charlotte D'Oyly, sister of Warren Hastings's intimate friend, Sir John Hadley D'Oyly, the sixth baronet. Stephen commanded the *Hector* from 1769 to 1778, the *Lord Holland* from 1780 to 1782, the *Sulivan* from 1783 to 1785, and the *Princess Amelia* from 1787 to 1788: finally he was a Director from 1791 to 1804.

In 1786 the Court of Directors took the matter of smuggling seriously in hand: and on 15 January notified[54] all and sundry that, 'having received information that great quantities of Tea, Muslins, Chinaware, Diamonds, and other merchandise have been illicitly imported in their ships and smuggled on shore to the very great damage of the Revenue, the Company and the fair trader, they do hereby offer and promise a reward to any person who shall make any discovery of such offence, of one-half of what the Company shall recover and receive, over and above all other rewards the parties are entitled to by law.' By way of further inducement it was announced that 'the name of the informer shall be kept secret, if required.' Drastic action followed, or at any rate, was announced. The *Calcutta Gazette* of 10 May 1787 includes in its news from Europe a statement that Captain William Smith the commander, and Mr. Patrick Burt the chief officer, of the *Dublin*, which arrived in the Downs from Bengal on 28 September 1786, had been found guilty of smuggling and had been dismissed from the Company's service. But the punishment, if inflicted, was either varied or remitted. For Smith and Burt both sailed in the *Dublin* on her next voyage (April 1788 to August 1789), which was to Bombay and Bengal. Nor was this all. Smith retained his command until December 1797. And Burt, after serving as chief officer of the *Duke of Buccleugh* from February 1792 to August 1793 was appointed to the command of the *Duke of Montrose* in May 1794, and held it until August 1802.

The actual tonnage of an Indiaman by no means corresponded with the registered total. Inasmuch as a ship of 500 tons or upwards was required by law to carry a chaplain, many were classed at exactly 499 tons. In fact, the whole of the ships chartered from 1748 to 1772 (with the exception of a few, mostly of a less tonnage) were registered at that figure. [This has puzzled many people, but the explanation

[54] The notification is published for general information in the *Calcutta Gazette* of 31 August 1786.

just given is supported by the testimony of a contemporary skipper, William Hutchinson, who became dockmaster at Liverpool and whose treatise on the building and management of merchantmen, published in 1781, contains a footnote at p. 289, giving this reason for the practice.[55] As will be seen later, there is also evidence from the Company's own records to confirm it. King William III's charter of 1698 required the Company to carry a chaplain on board any ship of 500 tons or over, and a similar provision appeared in Queen Anne's charter of 1702. At that period the Company had only three ships coming under it,[56] so the extra expense would not matter much; but later on, with more ships of that size being built, the Directors' desire to evade it becomes evident. Hardy's Register shows that from 1708 to 1747 all the ships were registered at under 500 tons (the highest rating was 498 tons), with only one exception, the *Protector*, of 580 tons, completed in 1751, just as the *Pitt* of 600 tons, ready in 1757, was the sole vessel registered above 499 tons from 1748 to 1772.

In the latter year Parliamentary enquiry into the affairs of the Company took place, and a notable Act (12 Geo. 3, cap. 54) was passed to restrict the quantity of its shipping. The preamble recites that the tonnage of the ships employed by, and being built for, the East India Company greatly exceeded the tonnage requisite to carry its trade, and that the building of any more ships for its service would prejudice the Royal Navy's requirements of 'oak timber of a proper growth.' The Act accordingly prohibited the provision of any more ships for it until the Company's tonnage was reduced to 45,000 tons, 'builder's measurement.' This made the actual tonnage of a ship, and not the amount chartered for freight by the Company, the criterion for rating the reduction required by the Act. At that time the total number of ships at sea, as shown in Hardy's Register

[55] This was first pointed out by E. K. Chatterton, *The Old East Indiaman*, edn. 1914, pp. 182–3; edn. 1933, p. 177.

[56] These were the *Tavistock*, 750, *Martha*, 620, and *King William*, 600 tons. See the Company's Letter Books, vol. x, pp. 226, 237, 279.

for the seasons 1771–2 and 1772–3, were fifty-two with a tonnage (at the rate of 499 tons a ship) aggregating under 26,000 tons.[57] It seems likely that this understatement attracted attention and may have been one of the reasons for another Act, passed in the following year (13 Geo. 3, cap. 74), which states the want of legal provision for settling the tonnage of ships in Great Britain, and the desirability of having 'one certain rule' for all cases where it was necessary to ascertain it. It then (with some small modification) laid down the rule for measurement by keel, beam, and half-beam (for depth), which had been applied by an Act of 1720 (6 Geo. 1, cap. 21, sec. 23) only to ships importing brandy and other prohibited goods. This took effect from 1st August 1773.

Meanwhile the question of altering the method of rating the tonnage of its ships was being considered by a Joint Committee of Correspondence and Shipping, appointed by the Court of Directors; its members conferred with the shipowners and held several meetings.[58] At the first of these (2 June 1773) it was resolved that 'it may be proper for the future to take up the ships to be employed in the Company's service at builder's measurement' (afterwards referred to as 'builder's tonnage'). Some demur seems to have been made by the owners, who wanted some consequential concessions. At meetings on 17 June and following dates, terms were agreed upon with them, including a stipulation that the Company should be 'accountable for whatever expenses may occur by the ships being chartered for above 499 tons in regard to a chaplain, schoolmaster,[59] etc'; and these terms were approved by the Court of Directors on 18

[57] The Committee of Secrecy (1772) give the number of ships employed abroad in that year as fifty-five, aggregating 39,836 tons, and of those being built as thirty of a total tonnage of 22,000: thus giving an excess of over 6,000 above the quota of 45,000 cf. Chatterton, p. 156; Robert Grant, *Sketch of the History of the East India Company* (1813), p. 342.

[58] India Office General Records, Correspondence Reports, vol. II. The Editor is indebted for this reference to a note by Sir William Foster left in the Records Department.

[59] The charter of 1698 also required the Company to provide a Schoolmaster in each main factory.

August 1773. This reference plainly admits the alleged reason for the practice of rating ships at 499 tons. Evidently the Company took upon itself the responsibility for any non-compliance with the terms of the charter, the continuance of which was doubtful, now that Parliament had substituted its authority over the Company's administration by passing the Regulating Act of 1773 (13 Geo. 3, cap. 63).

A comparison of the ships given as employed for 1769–80 in Hardy's Register shows that, out of sixty previously rated at 499 tons, forty rose after 1772 to between 657 and 750, and twenty became over 750, of which two were above 800 tons. In an apparent attempt to justify the rating of such a ship at 499 tons, the Company had in the charter-party for it generally covenanted with its owner that it should carry at least 499 tons of lading at a specified freight, with liberty to lade what more the Company pleased, mostly at half-freight.[60] This tendency to charter a ship at less than its full tonnage seems to have continued on a restricted scale. For though it was agreed in the proceedings mentioned above, that ships going to China should be taken up at full 'builder's tonnage,' the chartered tonnage was often less, e.g., 1,200 tons for ships of which the builder's measurement ran from 1,254 to 1,272 tons;[61] and in 1793 the Company openly called for vessels of 1,400 tons to be tendered for 1,200, and those of 820 for 799.[62]

Hardy's Register shows that the prohibition of 1772 against the Company's building more ships prevented the use of new ones (except five in 1773–5 that were presumably on the stocks when the Act was passed) for its voyages up to 1777–8. Of the seven that then started on their first voyage six were of 758, and one of 905 tons. The additions thereafter were nearly all vessels of 755 tons or 758 tons until 1786, when bigger ones, mostly of about 800

[60] Parliamentary Committee of Secrecy, 1772, Third Report, cited in I.O. List of Marine Records, p. xiii.

[61] H. B. Morse, II, 261, 285; III, 4, 341–2.

[62] Auber, p. 655.

and some of 900 to 1,150 tons, began to predominate.[63] The larger ships were mostly engaged in tea-trade with China, which immensely expanded after the reduction of the duties on tea in 1784; and thenceforward this trade absorbed most of the Company's shipping.[64] In 1785–86 controversy arose on the question whether ships of from 500 to 600 tons were not better to use for this instead of the larger vessels from 550 to 1,000 tons which the Director's favoured.[65] The Company rightly stuck to their view, for the larger ship was comparatively cheaper to build and had a more than proportionate carrying capacity.[66] In October 1793 the Company resolved that sixteen ships of 700 to 800 tons were requisite for the Indian trade, and fifteen of 1,200 tons for the China trade.[67] From that year 1,200 tons became a favourite figure, though it was perfectly well known that a 1,200 tons Indiaman displaced as much water as a three-decked battleship.[68] No less than fifty ships of that measurement were built between 1793 and 1817, when vessels of from 1,300 to over 1,400 tons began to supersede them.

In the eighteenth century the levy of tonnage[69] duties had little or no influence on planning the measurement of an Indiaman. A scale of general 'tonnage duties' on ships entering or leaving British ports was first introduced by an Act of 1803 (43 Geo. 3, cap. 68). Table No. 3 in Schedule A imposed a duty of 3/– a ton on ships trading to the East Indies. Section 5 of that Act continued also a small duty of 3½d. a

[63] This was in consequence of the Company's decision in 1784 to build three ships of from 1,000 to 1,200 tons (Auber, p. 650).

[64] Parkinson, pp. 93–4; Chatterton, p. 180; Philips, p. 82 *n*; Hardy, pp. 105 ff.

[65] Brough's pamphlet and Dalrymple's reply, 1786; Philips, p. 82; Parkinson, p. 174; Auber, pp. 650–1.

[66] Parkinson, p. 149; Chatterton, p. 180.

[67] Auber, pp. 654–5.

[68] Thus the *Hindostan*, rated in 1797–1803 at 1,248 tons, actually carried 1,890, while the famous 100-gun ship, H.M.S. *Victory*, rated at 2,143 tons, carried only 1,839 (Parkinson, p. 130).

[69] The word 'tonnage' in the expression 'tonnage and poundage' appearing in various Subsidy Acts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was originally a duty on tuns of wine or tons of beer, and was a duty on goods; it had nothing to do with the tonnage of a ship.

ton allowed to be imposed on all ships from the East Indies and China entering into or clearing from the Port of London under a local Act of 1799 (39 Geo. 3, cap. 69). Otherwise port dues had been leviable only on foreign ships under the Navigation Act of 1660 (12 Car. 2, cap. 18, sec. 17) and an Act of 1685 (1 Jac, cap. 18, sec. 2). From 1773, as already mentioned, it became obligatory to take the measurement by keel, beam, and half-beam.] This encouraged the practice of building ships deep with a great belly below the main beam; and the carrying capacity, which was far larger than the nominal burden, was increased at the expense of speed and sea-worthiness.[70] With its Dutch-built poop, its quarter galleries, and its capacious holds, the Indiaman was a cross between a castle and a floating warehouse.

[The number and size of East Indiamen now quickly increased. In 1791–2 there were ninety-two ships trading to India and China, measuring 81,179 tons — an average of 882 tons.[71] Soon afterwards discussion arose over the proposed introduction of ships built in India. An Act of 1772 (12 Geo. 3, cap. 54, sec. 3) had empowered the Company to build or hire ships in India, but this was intended for local trade or defence; and the Directors were opposed to the proposal to use them for its main trade to and from the East. Events, however, forced them to modify this attitude. The Charter Act of 1793 required the Company to furnish at least 3,000 tons of shipping annually for private trade; and Indiamen were also being taken by the Government for employment as auxiliary vessels in the war against France. To supply deficient tonnage, the Company was authorised in June 1795 (35 Geo, 3, cap. 115) to use 'proper ships' built in its territories in the East Indies for bringing home their investments of goods from China and India, in spite of the English Navigation Law to the contrary. Instructions accordingly had already been sent

[70] cf. Hannay, *Ships and Men*, pp. 123–4; Chatterton, p. 209.
[71] E. I. Papers, *Short History*, p. 31.

out, and India-built ships thus came into use for its general trade. In 1795 twenty-seven of them were dispatched from India with rice to relieve scarcity in Great Britain; and from 1798 to 1803 there was a large increase in their use under the encouragement of Lord Wellesley, the Governor General, who favoured the employment of private merchants in India for its export trade as against the foreigners who were absorbing most of it (p. 124 *post*). These India-built ships proved in some ways to be superior to the regular Indiaman. They could out-sail them, load and unload cargo more expeditiously, and broke tradition by sailing from England with European consignments out of the season prescribed for Indiamen, to the prejudice of the trade of the Company's servants. The Admiralty also favoured their use as reducing the demand for British oak, which was required for the Navy.[72] The first, or at any rate, one of the first such ships to be taken into the Company's regular service was the *Scaleby Castle*, a vessel of over 1,200 tons that was built at Bombay in 1798 and had shown exceptional speed in the journey to England. In 1806 she was tendered by William Moffat as ship's husband for a voyage to Bombay and China, which she did in 1807–8, and she went to China on no less than five other voyages up to 1818–9.[73] Others were meanwhile accepted by the Company, as is shown by the following figures for 1813.]

In that year there were 115 ships in the Company's

[72] Auber, pp. 603–4; Philips, pp. 107–9; 110 n., 126; Parkinson, pp. 362–4.

[73] Hardy's *Register* (1820), pp. 250, 275, 295, 318, 336, 347. The *Scaleby Castle* was built for the firm of Bruce, Fawcett and Co., founded by P. C. Bruce and Henry Fawcett (the Editor's great-grandfather), both of the Bombay Civil Service in the palmy days when its members were allowed to trade. Prior to her dispatch to England, she and other ships belonging to that firm were engaged in coastal trade and voyages to China. About 1805, she disappears from the list of ships shown in the 'East India Calendar' as owned by the Bombay firm, presumably because of her sale to William Moffat (J. Campbell, *Bombay District Gazetteer*, XXVI, pt. II, pp. 363–4; Milburn, I, 237; Douglas, I, 168–9, 242; W. E. Coates, *The Old Country Trade of the East Indies*, p. 91). In 1819 the *Scaleby Castle* would have been twenty years old; but she appears to have been still in service for voyages to the East in 1830, and her longevity was not exceptional, this being mainly due to the natural oil in the Malabar teak of which she and other India-built ships were constructed (Lubbock, pp. 50, 212; Parkinson, pp. 324–6). For a picture of one, see illustration opp. p. 80

service. Of these, forty-one were 'replacements,' thirty-five of them being of more than 1,200 tons register: thirty-six were 'extra ships,' of which the largest was the *David Scot* of 858 tons register, built at Bombay in 1801: thirty-three had been built by 'open competition': three were 'speculation ships': one, the *Thomas Grenville* of 923 tons, built at Bombay in 1809, was a 'Company's ship': and one, the *Fairlie* of 755 tons, built in Bengal in 1810, is not classified. The largest ships were the *Royal Charlotte* (built in 1785) and the *Walmer Castle* (1796) of 1,518 tons, the *Lowther Castle* (1811) of 1,507 tons, and the *Cirencester* (1794) and the *Coutts* (1796) of 1,504 tons — all 'replacements.'[74] Nineteen had been built in the East: seven 'in India,' six at Bombay, five in Bengal, and one at Penang. The managing owners or 'ship's husbands' numbered fifty-five. Of these thirty-one owned one ship each, twelve owned two, six owned three, and three owned four. John Pascall Larkin owned five, Henry Bonham nine, and Sir Robert Wigram ten.[75]

The number of Indiamen and the voyages undertaken varied from time to time. Twenty years earlier, in 1793 the fleet was composed of thirty-six ships of the 1,200-ton class and forty of 800 tons.[76] An examination of the 'List of Ships for the Season 1796–7,' which contains the names of thirty-four Indiamen, will give an idea of the usual voyages. Fifteen are taken up for the 'Coast and Bay' (the Coromandel Coast and the Bay of Bengal), five for Bombay, four for Bombay and China, four for China direct, two for the 'Coast' and China, and one each for the following: Bombay and Madras, St. Helena Madras and Bengal, Bengal and Bencoolen, St. Helena Bencoolen and China. Of the

[74] The tonnage of the last five ships varies slightly from that given by Hardy, and Chatterton, pp. 178–9; but Hardy gives the nominal or 'chartered' tonnage, and Chatterton, p. 237, confirms the figures given above for four of them.

[75] In the case of large ships there would ordinarily be partners in the ownership (Parkinson, pp. 186–7).

[76] Chatterton, p. 164, makes this statement, but Hardy's Register of ships employed from 1790 to 1793 seems to make the figures more like sixteen of the 1,200 class and sixty of 800 tons or thereabouts: cf. p. 45 as to the ships in 1791–2.

forty-three ships taken up for 1786, fifteen were for China direct, ten for the Coast and China, eleven for the Coast and Bay, two for Bombay, one direct to Bengal, and one each for Bencoolen and China, St. Helena and China, St. Helena and Bencoolen, and Bombay and Bengal. For the season 1804–5 fifty-two ships were chartered: seven for China direct, seven for the Coast and Bay, six for Madras alone, six for Madras and Bengal, five for St. Helena and Bengal, four for Bombay and China, three for Madeira, Coast and Bay, two for Bombay alone, two for Ceylon and Madras, two for Bombay and Bengal, and one each for Bengal and China, Coast and China, St. Helena Bencoolen and China, Bengal and Bencoolen, St. Helena and Madras, Bengal alone, Madeira and Bombay, and Madeira and Madras. The number for the season 1810–11 was fifty-three, of which thirteen were of 1,200 tons, one (the *Scaleby Castle*) of 1,242, and one (the *Taunton Castle*) of 1,198 tons. Twelve each were assigned to Bengal direct and Madras and Bengal: eight, all of 1,200 tons, to China direct, four to Bombay and China, three to Madras and China, three to Madeira Madras and Bengal, two each to St. Helena and Bengal, Bombay and Bengal, Ceylon and Bengal, and Madeira and Bengal, and one each to St. Helena Bencoolen and China, Madeira and Bombay, and Bombay direct.

It will have been observed from what has already been said, that the ships were chartered and were not owned by the Company. Private individuals, who were known as 'ship's husbands,'[77] were given the right to build ships which the Company bound itself to charter at stipulated rates. [In other words the Company contracted with the owners of a chartered vessel to freight a minimum tonnage of goods and ballast in her at the stipulated rates; and as has been shown (p. 43) this minimum was generally 499

[77] In the case of several part-owners they appointed one of their number to be the managing owner, i.e., 'ship's husband'; and as a counterpart the Company had an official called the 'Company's husband.' See Parkinson, p. 230; Chatterton, p. 82.

tons from 1748 to 1772. The rates for freightage were frequently the subject of a sharp contest between the shipowners, who wanted to raise them or keep them at a high level, and the Company, who tried to bring them down to a reasonably fair scale; and they fluctuated between £22 and £47 a ton from 1773 to 1795. In 1783 the Directors had succeeded in reducing the rate from £47 to £33 a ton by resorting to public advertisement for tenders of other ships; and in 1793 a majority of them desired to adopt a similar course and resolved that 'some permanent system may be established, upon principles of fair, well regulated, and open competition.' Steps were taken accordingly; and these, in spite of strong opposition by the 'old' shipping interest, were approved by a General Court of Proprietors in March 1796. The result was that the circle of shipowners became enlarged by the introduction of a 'new' shipping interest; and the desire for permanence was fulfilled by an Act of 1799 (39 Geo. 3, cap. 89), which enacted that ships employed by the Company in its regular service should be obtained under a system of open competition, viz. by calling for tenders through public advertisement, and acceptance (except in cases where it was accompanied by unreasonable proposals) of the lowest tender, without favour or partiality. This alteration was estimated in 1800 to have saved the Company at least £130,000 a year. It also led the Company to consider the abolition of the practice of 'hereditary bottoms,' which had become established in spite of prohibitions and tended to enhance the rates for freight (p. 25).][78] From about 1660 the owner of a ship had a vested right to be asked to build a successor: but in 1796 the system of 'hereditary bottoms' was abolished.[79] There was never any written engagement on the part either of the Company or of the 'ship's husband' for the continuance of the charter; but when a ship's

[78] I.O., List of Marine Records, pp. x–xv; Milburn, I, lxxvii–lxxxi; Philips, pp. 80–7, 95–6; 100; Parkinson, pp. 170–86.

[79] I.O. List of Marine Records, pp. x, xiii; Milburn, I, lxxviii–lxxx. Philips, pp. 86–7; Auber, p. 658.

turn came to be employed, the owner as a matter of form submitted a tender and proposed a particular person as commander: and both tender and proposal were almost invariably accepted.[80]

Under the provisions of the Act of 1799, mentioned above, the Company was restricted from employing in their 'regular' service any ships but such as were under contract with them to make six voyages to and from India and China, or elsewhere 'within the limits of the Company's exclusive trade.' The Company was further authorised, in the event of the loss of any such ship before the completion of her fifth voyage, to agree with the owner to build another ship of the same class. [The adoption about 1780 of copper sheathing as a protection against the ravages of the ship-worm, which lengthened the life of all vessels, and a desire to 'lessen the consumption of ship's timber,' which was rising in value, led to a further advance in 1803.][81] An Act of that year (43 Geo. 3, cap. 63) declared experience showed that repairs could make ships fit for more than six voyages, and permitted them to make two additional ones. These restrictions did not apply to the one or two ships which were owned by the Company itself. The *Britannia* of 770 tons register, made no less than twelve voyages between September 1780 and December 1805, when she was 'lost off the Brazils.' On her first voyage she was commanded by Captain George Hutchinson, a brother-in-law of Sir Eyre Coote, who married a daughter of Charles Hutchinson, Governor of St. Helens from 1746 to 1764. The *Sir Edward Hughes* of 957 tons, which was launched at Bombay on 22 March 1784, made nine voyages between July 1788, when she sailed from Bombay for Europe, and September 1807, when she was fitted out as a frigate on her return from Madras. There is also an instance of a private ship, the *Taunton Castle* of 1,198 tons which

[80] cf. Eastwick, pp. 41–2.

[81] cf. Hannay, *The Sea Trader*, p. 118. Though copper sheathing had an earlier start, Hickey says (II, 193) that scarcely any of the Company's ships in 1779 were copper bottomed.

made nine voyages from January 1791, to July 1812: and during that time she was owned by Peter Esdaile for the first six voyages and by Andrew Timbrell for the last three. The *Swallow* packet of 345 tons was launched at Bombay in April 1777 and sailed the seas until she was lost on a shoal in the Hooghly in June 1823. Her first duty was to carry the Company's despatches between India and England. Richard Barwell went home in her from Calcutta on 3 March 1780:[82] and she brought Lord Macartney to Madras on 22 June 1781.[83] A period of service followed in the Bombay Marine; but later on she returned to the merchant service. Her last voyage in that capacity was from 1799 to 1803, when she sailed from Falmouth to China and back. She was then sold to the Danes and afterwards captured by a British man-of-war in the West Indies. Her next appearance was as a British sloop of war; and she ended her career as a private merchantman.[84]

[82] Busteed, p. 268.
[83] Love, III. 221.
[84] Chatterton, pp. 175–6; Low, I. 176–7.

CHAPTER TWO

Life on Board

IMPRESSMENT for His Majesty's Navy was the greatest bugbear of the officers and crew of an Indiaman. Hickey (IV. 411) speaks of 'the strange motley crowd' on board the *Castle Eden* which took him home in 1808, and tells us that it was composed of natives of almost every nation in Europe, besides nine Americans and eighteen Chinamen. There were not, he says, more than ten English seamen among them: and yet (IV. 461) when the ship 'saw' the South Foreland and 'opened' Dover cliff and town, a lieutenant from a sloop-of-war boarded her and took off twenty-two of the ship's company for service in His Majesty's Navy. This was a favourite practice. Press smacks were sent out to cruise up and down the Channel and intercept returning ships: gangs would board them when they had come to anchor off Spithead, and remove all the able-bodied seamen that could be found. Joseph Farington records in his diary on 4 August 1804 that, when he was staying at Broadstairs, he went out in a boat to the Downs where 'the homeward bound Indiamen were laying at anchor, having had their men pressed.'

So great was the anxiety to escape impressment that it almost led to the capture of the *Lord Eldon* in June 1802. She was lying off the Needles, outward bound and waiting for passengers, when a vessel approached her under cover of a sudden sea-fog. The men thinking that she was a King's ship went into hiding; and Captain Jasper Swete, coming up from below, found that the crew of a French privateer

had swarmed on board. He promptly gave the alarm and, making for a Frenchman who had seized the wheel, cut off his head with one stroke of a sword. Inspired by this example, his men made short work of the boarding party and the privateer sheered off.[1]

On 5 January 1809, the *Warren Hastings* of 1,000 tons (the third of her name) sailed from Spithead on her maiden voyage to Bengal and China, Captain Thomas Larkins in command. Acting-Quartermaster John Shipp of the 24th Dragoons was on board, returning to India; and he relates in his *Memoirs* how, when they were lying in Torbay in bad weather, a King's officer and six men put off from a ship-of-war which was riding the gale. As the naval officer came up the side of the Indiaman, 'every sailor writhed his limbs and features into the most ludicrous distortions: some limped, some stooped, and all did their utmost to appear decrepit and unfit for service.' Six of the best seamen were 'pressed' nevertheless: and Captain Larkins was left to continue his voyage as best he could.[2] [To avoid, as far as possible, the heavy toll caused by impressment of this kind, the Company used to ask for protection orders from the Admiralty, covering the crew of its ships about to sail for the East.[3] But even this protection was liable to be ignored by naval officers in the Channel. Thus in 1810, the Directors complained that two men had been impressed by H.M. Sloop *Tyrian* from the Indiaman *Juliana* on a passage from the Downs to Portsmouth despite the commander's production of the Admiralty protection order; and many similar cases could be cited.][4] From the Company's point of view, however, it was a far more serious matter when their ships were drained of their best seamen, and frequently also of their petty officers, in Eastern waters where it was impossible to replace them. Upon the arrival

[1] cf. Chatterton. pp. 171–2.

[2] Memoirs of John Shipp. (London, 1829), p. 29.

[3] cf. G.R. Miscellanies, vol. I, pp. 320–1, and similar applications in vols. I and II.

[4] Public Record Office, Ad. 8/3917, letter of 31 May 1810: cf. Chatterton, pp. 136–9, 146–7.

of the *Perseverance* (1,200 tons) at Whampoa, the Canton anchorage, on 5 February 1807, Captain James Tweedale reported that his 'ship's company had been weakened to a very great degree by having no less than forty-one of the best seamen impressed by H.M.S. *Blenheim* (Sir Thomas Troubridge, commanding the fleet east of Ceylon), and we have since we left Penang (on 7 December 1806) lost six of our men from sickness and have now no less than thirty-four men in the sick report with dysentery and scurvy.'[5]

In 1810, representations were made by the Court of Directors to the Admiralty on the subject. [These stated that, in view of the Company's losses at sea in the previous twelve months, an investigation had been made by the Directors, and they had found that ships had been lost because they were seriously undermanned due to impressment. For instance the Captain of the Company's ship *Asia* had been unable to handle his ship efficiently, after she had been boarded by the Navy on 4 May 1809 and many of the crew impressed. The Captains of the ships *Lord Castlereagh*, *Earl Spencer*, *Monarch*, and *Streatham* reported similar difficulties caused by impressment. This led to regrettable animosity between the Indiamen's officers and officers of the Navy, and the Company suggested that impressment should be restricted to certain members of their crews. In a later letter of 7 June 1810 they urged that means should be adopted for putting it entirely out of power of the Officers of the Navy in India to violate the arrangements which might be made at home for protecting, within reasonable limits, the sailors on board the Indian ships, and that without such protection it would be utterly impossible for these ships to provide a permanent and regulated supply of seamen for the King's service. The correspondence resulted in the Admiralty agreeing to give protection to the whole of the officers, petty officers, tradesmen and servants in the ships, and to allow only a

[5] Morse, III, 133–4.

certain number out of the remaining part of the crew to be pressed from each class of ships.][6] Orders were accordingly issued to 'William O'Brien Drury, Esq., Rear-Admiral of the Red, commanding in the East Indies,' that a certain specified number only were to be pressed according to the tonnage of the ship, while within the limits of the naval command in the Indian seas. The following were declared to be protected until return to Europe, when serving in ships of 800 to 1,400 tons: the fifth and sixth mates 'if in the character of gentlemen,' the seven midshipmen, 'being all young gentlemen,' the three petty officers with their servants 'who are all to be landsmen or boys,' the carpenter, caulker, cooper, sailmaker, armourer, and the mates of the first three, the quartermaster's and boatswain's and gunner's mates, the commander's and officers' servants, the captain's and the ship's stewards, and the captain's and ship's cooks: from a ship of 800 tons, ten seamen might be pressed: from a ship of 1,200 tons, eighteen: from a ship of 1,400 tons, twenty: while six seamen might be taken from the 'extras' or small ships which ranged from 400 to 700 tons, and protection was given to three midshipmen, the boatswain, gunner, carpenter, cooper, and steward, the carpenter's mate and caulker, the cooks and stewards, and the commander's two servants. [The Company supplemented these orders by informing its government in India that

> As the Regulations have been made with the full expectation that they may completely put an end to those unpleasant dissentions beforementioned, we shall give the most positive orders to the commanders of our ships that they themselves and officers do upon all occasions behave with the utmost attention and respect to His Majesty's officers in the execution of their duty and upon no consideration to encourage or receive deserters from His Majesty's Navy or to refuse to muster their ships' companies, or to practice any deception whatever when their ships are visited by His Majesty's officers.][7]

[6] Public Record Office, Ad. 1/3917, the Co's letter of 22 Feb. 1810, and resulting correspondence in that file and Ad. 2/659; Co's letter of 4 May 1810 to the government in India (Bengal Despatches, vol. LIII, p. 689).

(*Continued on p.* 56)

The press-gang was only one among the commander of an Indiaman's troubles. The mortality in Eastern waters was heavy and desertion was frequent. It is recorded in the log of the *Manship*, an Indiaman of 755 tons, which left Gravesend on 24 December 1785, under command of Captain Charles Gregorie, and arrived in the River Hugli in the middle of June 1786, that of the crew of 132 five 'ran' at Madras, twenty-five at Diamond Harbour, and eighteen at Calcutta. The Calcutta desertions are spread over the period from 16 June to 25 September 1786, and there were four deaths also.

Significant evidence of loss by disease is afforded by the Burial Registers of St. John's Church, Calcutta. The entries between 19 April 1783 and 31 October 1788[8] contain the names of three commanders (Thomas Poynting of the *Resolution*, Peter Pigou of the *Blandford* and Joseph Williamson of the *Ganges*), twelve officers (from first mate to sixth), two pursers, four surgeons, three surgeon's mates, ten midshipmen, four boatswains, and eighty seamen of all categories below and including the rank of gunner. The *Berrington*, which sailed for home on 5 February 1785 with Warren Hastings on board, contributed nine names between 25 November and 23 December 1784. The *Lord Camden*, Captain Nathanial Dance, which anchored at Kedgeree on 22 July 1787, reported that her crew had been 'very sickly' during the voyage from Europe, which began on 6 January 1787, and that twenty-three men had died. Nevertheless 'we do not find,' says the *Calcutta Gazette* of 28 July 1787, 'that the length of her voyage can be imputed to any other cause than that of her being a dull sailer.' The losses by her death seem almost to be taken as a matter of course: and yet navigation must have been hindered in consequence.

(*Continued from p.* 55)

[7] Co's letter of 4 May 1810 (Bengal Despatches, vol. LIII, p. 689). In spite of a thorough search in the records of the Admiralty of that period in the Public Record Office, and in those of the East India Company in the Commonwealth Relations Office, no copy of this regulation of 1810 has been found. The editor surmises that Sir Evan procured a copy of it at Calcutta.

[8] *Bengal: Past and Present*, XXXII, 111–32.

On 4 March 1784, the *Calcutta Gazette* printed the following letter from Captain James Rees of the *Northumberland*, dated Canton, 3 December 1783:

> 'Having been detained at Bencoolen till January 19 (1783) I was prevented from going to China by the passage I intended, and I was then forced by contrary winds and currents in sight of Amboyna, Banda and others of the Molucca islands, and to the coast of New Guinea, where I had the misfortune to lose my chief, third and fourth officers, who, with twelve of the crew were surprised on shore and all of them killed by the natives. From this time (April 23) until our arrival in China (in July) the whole was a continued scene of distress and danger. A dreadful mortality on board deprived me of all the best of my people. The second mate and the carpenter were the only two officers of any denomination left. Since our departure from Bengal we buried 75 of the ship's company.'[*9]

An interesting sidelight on desertion is supplied by notifications in the *Calcutta Gazette* of 8 July 1790 and 7 July 1791. A letter from the Court of Directors is published upon each occasion, in which orders are given that a number of persons, whose names are shown in a list, shall proceed to England by the first opportunities that offer. If they remain in Bengal or elsewhere in India, they are warned that they will be dealt with as unlicenced persons. All are deserters from various Indiamen, of which there are twenty-two in the first list, and twenty-five in the second. 'The frequency of desertions of persons in different stations from the freighted ships in our service make it necessary,' write the Hon'ble Court, 'that some effectual means shall be adopted to prevent the like in future,' because 'Persons so leaving their ships procure appointments sometimes in preference to those who proceed to India with our permission as assistant surgeons or in the sea services of private merchants.' An analysis of the names in one of the lists reveals some remarkable results: nineteen are

*9 The *Northumberland* sailed from Plymouth upon this voyage on 26 June 1781, and anchored in the Downs upon her return on 29 May 1784. Captain Rees continued in command until February 1797 and then became ship's husband and Captain of the *Houghton* of 778 tons, which he took out to Bombay in September 1799.

midshipmen, nine mates, and six surgeons. Some have been left 'sick,' but the word 'run' appears after the majority of the names.

The gaps made in the ship's company by death and desertion, and the needs of His Majesty's Navy, were filled by Chinamen and Lascars, who were entered on the books in the ratio of three to every one European seaman. [The original rule, first laid down by the Navigation Act of 1660 and continued by an Act of 1794, was that a ship importing goods from the East should have 'a Master and at least three fourths of the mariners British Subjects,' so that the legal ratio of Chinamen and Lascars employed on the homeward voyage was only one to three British seamen. In 1803 the exigencies of war made Parliament alter this to a proportion of three to one.][10] Ultimately the rule was made that an Indiaman must carry four English seamen to every hundred tons register and that as many Lascars might then be added as were necessary.[11] When Hickey came to Calcutta from Madras in the summer of 1783 on board the store-ship *Tortoise* (Captain Serocold) they were obliged, for want of a pilot, to anchor in Balasore Roads from 2–10 June.[12] Close by them was an Indiaman flying signals of distress, and on sending a boat on board, it was ascertained that she was the *Earl of Chesterfield* (Captain Bruce Boswell), 'last from Bombay.' She had only twenty-five Europeans in her crew, the rest being Lascars 'who were utterly exhausted by the labour of continuous pumping.'

As Lascars might only be employed on the home voyage,

[10] See 24 Geo. 3, cap. 68, and 43 Geo. 3, cap. 64.

*[11] [This was laid down by an Act of 1823 (4 Geo. 4, cap. 80), but it was only 'a counsel of perfection' (Hannay, *The Sea Trader*, p. 120)]. The 'country ships' which traded from port to port in the east, were not subject to the same restrictions as Indiamen and were wholly manned by Lascars under a British commander [who usually had two or three other Englishmen to help him: cf. Parkinson, 335].

*[12] [*Memoirs*, III, 132–4.] Commanders who reached Balasore Roads at any time between the new and the full moon of June and failed to pick up a pilot, were advised by no means to come to an anchor but stand out to sea. But Captain Serocold, being in hourly expectation of seeing a pilot schooner, deemed it more prudent to remain in the usual track of them.

they were taken back as passengers at the Company's expense. While in London they were lodged in boarding houses supervised by the Company. In 1814 the murder of a Lascar led to an enquiry, and it was then found that there were nearly two thousand in London.[13] If we are to believe Lieutenant John Shipp,[14] the supervision exercised by the Company was not always as effective as it might be. Shipp went out to the Cape as a recruit with the headquarters of the 22nd Regiment on the *Surat Castle* in 1800. An 'immense number of Lascars' were put on board. They 'had been picked up in every sink of poverty, and most of them had been living in England in a state of the most abject want and wretchedness.' Their condition of health was such that 'a pestilential disease' broke out, and many died. The English soldiers were little better off. 'Men literally slept upon one another and on the orlop deck the standing beds were three tiers high, besides those slinging'. Before reaching the Cape, scurvy made its appearance as well. 'Almost every fourth man among the Europeans and more than two-thirds of the Asiatics fell victims to the diseases on board': and the remainder were so weakened that for the first fortnight after landing at Simons Bay drills were out of the question. Andrew Barnard, the Colonial Secretary at the Cape, writes to Lord Macartney on 14 May 1800: 'The *Surat Castle* arrived a day or two ago in Simons Bay. She had on board about 150 men of the 22nd Regiment, fifty-six of them died on the passage and upwards of 100 Lascars: the remainder are in a most sickly state, I am told.'[15]

[13] cf. Hannay's *Ships and Men*, p. 130, and *Great Chartered Companies*, p. 116.

*[14] Memoirs of John Shipp, p. 54.

*[15] *Lady Ann Barnard at the Cape*, 1797–1802 (Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 204. Lady Anne Barnard, the author of *Auld Robin Gray* was the daughter of the fifth Earl of Balcarres, and in 1793 at the age of forty-two married Andrew Barnard, the son of the Bishop of Limerick, who was twelve years her junior. When Lord Macartney was sent to the Cape in 1797, as first British Governor, Barnard accompanied him as Colonial Secretary on a salary of £3,500 a year 'in lieu of all emoluments' and remained after Macartney's return in 1798. Lady Anne had eight brothers, of whom Hugh Lindsay commanded an Indiaman and was subsequently a Director for many years. More will be said of him on a later page.

Discipline was generally maintained on board by flogging: and frequent references to the infliction of this punishment may be found in the ships' logs which are preserved at the India Office. On 31 May 1790, the captain of the *William Pitt* makes this entry on the outward voyage to Bengal: 'Punished five recruits with two dozen and one dozen lashes for mutinous and riotous behaviour.' John Shipp relates that 'the cat o' nine tails was constantly at work 'during the voyage to India in 1809 of the *Warren Hastings*: and so many of the soldiers on board were flogged that Captain Thomas Larkins at last intervened and informed the senior military officer that he 'would not have his quarter-deck turned into a slaughter-house.'[16]

From the log of the *Belvedere* (Captain William Greer) we may learn by studying the entry of 24 December 1787, what was meant by 'flogging round the fleet.' News reached Calcutta from Canton a month later (*Calcutta Gazette* for 24 January 1788) that a mutiny had occurred on the ship at Whampoa and that 'every officer down to the midshipmen was thrown overboard but none drowned.' The outbreak followed the putting of a seaman in irons on 2 December, and it was only after a considerable resistance that ten of the ringleaders were secured and placed in confinement on board the *Earl Fitzwilliam*, which was the ship of the senior commander, Captain James Dundas. A court of sixteen commanders was formed, and judgment was pronounced on December 15.

> 'It has not appeared (say the captains) that there has been the least cause for a murmur among the ship's Company either for ill usage from the commander or any one officer or petty officer in the ship. This daring mutiny has arisen from a spirit that prevailed that they were on board of a merchantman where according to their own expression they would not meet with due punishment. It also appears that on the second day of the meeting the prisoners were all sober and deliberate but one man, Kelly, who pleaded drunkenness, the others never attempting any defence of that sort or saying anything in their own vindication. We are therefore of opinion that this

[16] Memoirs of John Shipp, p. 140.

daring mutiny, had it not been immediately suppressed by about eighteen boats manned and armed from the Company's ships, the consequences would have been dreadful not only to that ship, but [through] this spirit spreading to the fleet in general where there are above three thousand of His Majesty's subjects.'

Two men were sentenced to 180 lashes which were to be inflicted 'round the fleet': and the remainder, with the exception of one whose sentence was remitted, to a varying number of lashes on board the *Belvedere*. The judgment was approved by the select committee at Canton,[17] and the log of the *Belvedere* relates the manner of its execution on 24 December:

'At seven A.M. having unrigged the long boat made a stage on her and sent her on board the commodore for to have Berry and Lilly flogged round the fleet, which was done accordingly — round eighteen ships. At noon the captain (Greer) brought Lieff, Ladson, Jackson, Skinner, Langford, Connor and Hastings on board from the *Earl Fitzwilliam* to receive their punishment: when Kieff and Ladson had five dozen lashes each, Connor, Jackson and Skinner four dozen, and Langford and Hastings two dozen.'

It is perhaps hardly surprising that the next entry in the log should read: 'Thomas Millward, seaman, run from the ship.'

On 17 January 1799, the Court of Directors issued regulations for the promotion of orderly behaviour in the Company's ships,[18] 'it having come to the knowledge of this Court that the good order and wholesome practices, formerly observed, have been laid aside, and late Hours and the consequent Mischiefs introduced, by which the Ship has been endangered and the Decorum and Propriety, which should be maintained, destroyed.' Fires were prohibited, 'beyond Eight at Night,' except for the use of the sick, and then only in a stove; candles were to be extinguished by nine o'clock between decks, and ten at the latest, in the cabins; and the utmost precautions were to be

[17] Morse, II, 146–8. [Captain Dundas was brought to trial in England over the matter, but was acquitted, and complimented by the Judges (Parkinson, p. 378)].

[18] Hardy (1820), App., 130–1; Parkinson, pp. 385–6.

taken to prevent the lights from being visible to passing vessels. The hour for dinner was not to be later than two o'clock, 'and when the Commander retires from Table, either after Dinner or Supper, the Passengers and Officers of the ship retire also.' The Captain was strictly conjoined to pay due attention to the comfortable accommodation and liberal treatment of his passengers, 'at the same time setting them an example of Sobriety and Decorum, as he values the pleasure of the Court.' Any 'excess or disorderly Behaviour below, being equally repugnant to the good Order and Discipline of the ship, will, on Representation, be noticed by the Court and not fail to incur their Displeasure.' Cases of improper conduct by the ship's officers towards the passengers or each other 'shall be quietly made known to the Commander, who shall weigh the circumstances with impartiality and, if conciliation be ineffectual, decide according to the best of his Judgment,' which was expected to be conformed to by every person concerned. Nevertheless, an appeal might be made to the Governor and Council of the first settlement at which the ship arrived or, if homeward bound, to the Court of Directors. Lastly, it is pointed out that 'the Diversity of Characters and Dispositions which must meet on shipboard makes some Restraint upon all necessary,' and warning is given that 'any one offending against good Manners or known Usages and Customs will, on Representation to the Court, be severely noticed.' A copy of these regulations was ordered to be delivered to every passenger proceeding to and from India or China, previous to their going on board and they were 'enjoined a strict observance thereof.' [Among the recognised usages was one that the privilege of walking on the windward side of the quarterdeck was reserved for the captain alone, whenever he was on deck, and that, apart from him, only the three senior mates, the purser, the surgeon, and those passengers who boarded at the captain's table, might do so.][19]

[19] Williamson, I, 34; Twining, pp. 22–3; Parkinson, p. 285.

It was not to be expected, however, that human nature would be proof against the inaction and tedium of these long voyages. The compensations were not many. Fishing could always be had, when the ship was becalmed, and dinner parties would be given on different vessels of the fleet. The 'crossing of the line' might be counted upon to provide its quota of excitement. All newcomers were expected to pay half a crown towards grog for the crew;[20] and those who did not were let down from the yard arm by a rope round their middle and ducked three times in the sea. [Otherwise cards, music, conversation and dancing would form the staple amusements. The passengers might often supply the music, but in the latter part of the eighteenth century 'musicians' were also carried as part of the crew. Thus Anthony Brough's pamphlet of 1786, complained of the 'luxury' in an Indiaman of that time, including the provision of 'symphonies' expressive of 'Cleopatra sailing down the Cydnus to meet Mark Anthony.' To this his antagonist, Alexander Dalrymple, replied that the musicians consisted of only some French horns, the strains of which reminded one not of 'the voluptuous Cleopatra' but of 'that manly animation which raises the spirits of the coward and inspires the soul to glorious deeds.'[21] During the time when a trumpeter was a regular member of the crew, he would be available to join in such martial music; and in 1697 Edward Barlow, while acting as captain of the Indiaman *Sceptre*, took her musicians, who played a violin and a hautboy, with him to enliven a festive evening at the Surat factory.][22]

[20] This arrangement probably became customary after 1792, when Twining (*Travels*, pp. 30–2), then a youth of seventeen on his first voyage, had to arrange for special exemption from the rough ceremony by a present of 'the very liquor which Neptune had put with such apparent satisfaction to his lips'; and his Memoirs suggested that 'it would be easy to satisfy the sailors by the compromise so successful in my case.' The practice may, however, have varied in different ships, as Hickey (I, 150) in 1769 speaks of 'the customary forfeit of a gallon of rum for the ship's crew.'

[21] Parkinson, pp. 278, 297, 390; Brough's pamphlet, 1786, p. 34; Dalrymple's answer, 1786, pp. 51–2.

(*Continued on p.* 64)

But the monotony would prevail, and it was apt to react in less cheerful ways. Often there would be a succession of deaths on board, and a series of 'buryings before breakfast.' Suicides were not uncommon, and violent quarrels would break out. Captain Chisholme of the *Gatton* fell out with his passengers on the voyage to Bengal in 1778 to such an extent, and 'his behaviour towards them was so disagreeable and unconciliating,' that during the last two months not one of them would speak to him.[23] Cadets would fight duels at the first convenient landing-place such as on the island of Johanna:[24] and older men would even challenge the captain. The Hon. Robert Lindsay, who went out to Bengal in the *Prince of Wales* in 1772, records in his *Anecdotes of an Indian Life* that the commander, Jonathan Court, 'a peppery Welshman,' had lost an arm in a duel with a passenger on the previous voyage, over a young lady to whom both had taken a fancy.[25]

A tomb in St. Mary's burying-ground at Madras testifies to the fatal termination of another of these duels. It bears the name of Thomas Rumbold Taylor, a young commander of the *Glory* aged 28, who was killed on 4 March 1804 by Major William Davison. It was Taylor's first voyage as captain of an Indiaman, and he had been compelled on the way out from Plymouth to put Major Davison who was a passenger on board, under arrest. A lengthy enquiry was held on arrival at Madras in consequence of a complaint made to the Governor in Council by Major Davison. The finding of the committee, as recorded in the Fort Saint

(*Continued from p.* 63)

[22] Barlow, pp. 487–8. In the seventeenth century the 'trumpeter' was an important member of the crew, and used to accompany the captain on visits to native potentates and other ceremonial occasions (cf. Hannay, *Ships and Men*, p. 128, and Hamilton, I, 165). In 1671 he was paid £2 a month (Mar. Misc. No. 14, p. 4). In the eighteenth century he disappears from the pay-list; but his duties might still have been performed by a musical member of the ship's company.

[23] Hickey, III, 215. [24] cf. Hickey, I, 156–7.

*[25] *Lives of the Lindsays*, IV, 10. Court made altogether five voyages in command of the *Prince of Wales* (1762–77), and was afterwards captain of the *Fox* packet in a voyage from Bristol to St. Helena, China, and Bengal (1781–83). His son Jonathan Court was a Bengal writer of 1779.

George Consultations for 31 March, was that 'the late Captain Taylor was justified in placing Major Davison in confinement,' and he was on 13 April suspended from the Company's service by Lord William Bentinck.[26]

The cause of the quarrel was once again a young lady: and it was by no means uncommon. The story goes (*se non e vero e ben trovato*) that upon one occasion three of the passengers on an Indiaman fell in love with the same charmer and decided to fight it out at the Cape: whereupon the object of their affections interposed and declared that she would marry them in turn — a feat which the obliging Indian climate enabled her in due course to perform!

Some such flavour of romance seems to surround the announcement in the *Calcutta Gazette* of 12 August 1790, of the arrival at Diamond Harbour on 8 August of the *William Pitt*, Indiaman, under the command of Captain Charles Mitchell: for the event was considered by the passengers on board to be of sufficient importance to warrant the striking of a medal, which is now in the possession of an American collector, Dr. Malcolm Story of Boston. On the obverse is a broadside view of the *William Pitt*, with the legend: 'Sailed f(ro)m ye Downs April 19, 1790': and on the reverse is a shield engraved with the initials J.T. and accompanied by the words 'Arrived in Bengal August 1790 *Post tot naufragia portus*.' An examination of the log kept during the voyage reveals no storms or other occurrences which can justify the Latin quotation. But Dr. Storey has suggested to the writer that a clue may be found in the initials on the shield. The list of passangers contains the names of seven young ladies, of whom one was Miss Jane Turnbull: and the 'shipwrecks' may therefore refer to the susceptible hearts which were broken on board in the effort to win the young lady's affections. Three officers of the 76th regiment made the voyage with her — Lieut. J. C. Gordon, Lieut.

[26] The *Glory* sailed from Plymouth on 17 July 1803, and anchored in Madras Roads on 1 February 1804. Taylor was twenty-eight years old at the time of his death. He had been third officer of the *Dublin* (April 1798 — June 1800) and first officer of the *Prince William Henry* (September 1800 — November 1801).

Peter Tolfrey, and Ensign James Stuart — and no doubt all were rivals in the contest. It is just possible, however, that the 'shipwrecks' were due to the quarrels of the ladies with each other; for it must be said with regret that such occurrences were not unknown. On 28 July 1780 a Madras correspondent of James Augustus Hicky announced in the *Bengal Gazette*[27] the arrival of an Indiaman from England with eleven young ladies on board, whose differences of opinion had been so decided during the last three months of the voyage that they could not show one undamaged hat between them on landing and their clothing had been torn to shreds.

In January 1804 a complaint was lodged at Madras against Captain Thomas Mortimer of the *General Stuart*; he was charged by Ensign Johnson of the 34th Regiment with supplying bad provisions and also with drunkenness. Fondness for the bottle is imputed in unmistakable language by William Hickey to William Greer, the first officer of the *Nassau*, which brought him to Bengal in 1788.[28] It seems to have necessitated his retirement from the Company's service between 1780 and 1787; but it did not prevent him from obtaining command of the *Belvedere* in the latter year and retaining it until 1791. Peter Burt, chief officer of the *Dublin*, was another toper. He got excessively drunk at a jovial party at Hickey's house in the beginning of the year 1789 and 'abused' him 'exceedingly,' so much so that his captain, William Smith, brought him round the next morning to 'make every possible atonement for his abominable and outrageous conduct.' He, too, held command of an Indiaman for eight years (1794 to 1802). Things were little better in the King's Navy, for Captain Dalgarno of H.M.S. sloop *Arethusa*, who was also of the party, is

[27] This was the weekly newspaper started by the scurrilous printer J. A. Hicky, at Calcutta on 29 January 1780 (Busteed, p. 183). A precursor of it began in 1778 (ibid. 184; Hickey, II, 175).

[*28] *Memoirs*, II, 190, 216. For notes on William Greer see *Bengal: Past and Present*, XXVIII, p. 236; XXIX, p. 233. He married a sister of Sir John Hadley D'Oyly, the sixth baronet. His name first appears in Hardy's Register as fourth officer of the *Royal Captain* (Bombay, 26 May 1761 to 5 July 1762).

described by Hickey (III. 362–3) as 'the most drunken varlet I ever saw.'

Passage-money constituted an important part of the commander's perquisites. Colonel Alexander Champion, who directed the first campaign against the Rohillas, writes in his diary on November 23-27, 1764;[29]

> 'I took my passage home in the ship *Vansittart* (Captain Richard Lewin), agreeing to pay for two windows (of the great cabin) Two thousand Rupees, that one-half was to be paid the first day of December, whether I went in the ship or otherwise, and after this if I did not declare off, I was to pay the whole. I was under the necessity of doing this, in order to secure a Passage in due season. I am also providing everything for my passage home.'

We have it also from Hickey (I. 181) that Captain Charles Haggis of the *Thames*, calling at Madras on his way home from Bengal in 1769, demanded three hundred guineas for a passage in the steerage.

Hickey tells us elsewhere (II. 98) that when he went out in the *Seahorse* in 1777 the ship was so crowded that he had to 'submit to be with three other gentlemen' in a cabin, and was called upon in addition to pay a hundred guineas for a seat at the captain's table. which was double what he had paid in 1769 to Captain Waddell of the *Plassey*. As a matter of fact, there were no less than twenty-two persons at the captain's table. Among them were the two Miss Berties, Captain Arthur's sisters-in-law 'who were going out in search of husbands,'[30] the captain's nephew, 'a fine boy of about fourteen making his first voyage as a guinea-pig [midshipman]' the first and second officers, the surgeon and the purser. But even if these are eliminated, the captain had fourteen others, in addition to Hickey, from whom to extract the hundred guneas apiece. The third and fourth

*[29] I.O. Home Misc. No. 198.

[30] [Hickey, II, 101]. Miss Ann Bertie married Thomas North Taylor, the Company's Attorney, on 17 September 1778, and Miss Diana Bertie married Joseph Cator, factor in the Company's service, on 31 October 1780. Both weddings took place in Calcutta where Miss Susan Bertie had already been married to Captain David Arthur on 22 September 1774.

officers messed apart with the three remaining passengers.[31]

In the *Duke of Portland* (Captain John Sutton), which sailed on the same day, the whole of the accommodation had been taken up by Edward Wheler, who was going out to succeed Colonel Monson on the Supreme Council at Fort William.[32] There was nothing unusual about this. 'Bob' Pott 'agreed' with Captain James Urmston for the whole of the roundhouse and half the great cabin for himself and Emily Warren (the 'Thais' of Sir Joshua Reynolds' picture) when he went out to Bengal on board the *Lord Mulgrave* in June 1781.[33] It is to be regretted that Hickey forgets to tell us what price his friend paid for his extravagance. [But a monopolist like Wheler or Pott was apt to be a nuisance from the large amount of baggage he brought with him. Barlow, when chief mate of the *Rainbow* on her voyage to China in 1687, speaks of a passenger 'having his movables along with him, so that we had scarce room for our seamen and provisions.'[34] Regulations of 1795 limited the quantity of baggage allowed to be taken from England to India to a maximum of $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons down to $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons according to the passenger's rank; and the lower limit was reduced to one ton by 1820. Still more was it necessary to restrict the quantity permitted to be brought from India to England; and regulations of 1801, which gave limits of 5 to 2 tons according to the passenger's rank, mentioned that one ship had brought home 'the immense quantity' of 63 tons.][35]

When Hickey began his second voyage to England in March 1779 on board the *Nassau* (Captain Arthur Gore) the whole of the roundhouse and great cabin had already been disposed of, but he obtained a 'spacious cabin on the larboard side of the cuddy' for five thousand sicca rupees.

[31] Hickey, II, 103–4.

[32] Hickey, II, 98.

[33] Hickey, III, 313. As to Captain Urmston's trouble with the Company over this, see n. 1 at p. 175 *post*.

[34] Barlow, p. 386.

[35] Milburn, I, 261–3; Hardy (1820), App. pp. 151–2. There were earlier restrictions limiting the quantity of baggage which a factor might bring home on his retirement.

The rate had risen when he made his final voyage home, twenty-nine years later. He paid 8,000 sicca rupees for his cabin and passage money to Captain Richard Colnett[36] of the *Castle Eden* in February 1808, and spent Rs. 20,800 more upon 'outfit in clothes, furniture for cabin, etc.', the latter including two large teakwood chests, a bureau 'with writing desk and apparatus,' a 'capital cot for sleeping in,' and a table.[37] A further sum of Rs. 1,235 represented the cost of 'wine sent on board,' in the shape of a chest of claret and another of madeira: and he had also to pay Rs. 500 for a sloop to convey him to the ship which was, as usual, lying at some distance down the river.

As there were twelve other passangers in the *Castle Eden* and 'a number of children going to Europe for their education,' Captain Colnett must have done well. Hickey chose the starboard side of the great cabin, upon the recommendation of the captain, in preference to the roundhouse, 'as being upon all occasions much quieter.'

[36] Captain Colnett was an old friend of Hickey. When he was in command of his first ship, the *King George*, in 1792, he paid frequent visits to him at Chinsurah, while in Bengal. He was 'uncommonly small in stature, certainly not above four feet and a half, but made up in spirit what he wanted in body, for a braver man never existed.' (*Memoirs*, IV, 75–6).

[37] [*Memoirs*, IV, 357, 370, 373, 397. Similarly Forbes states (III, 404) that in 1783, when there was an exceptional demand for homeward passages, Rs. 8000 (£1,000) had to be paid for a single passage; and though the demand had slackened by the time he embarked in the *General Elliott* early in the following year (III, 404; IV, 107–8), yet her commander had received upwards of eighty thousand rupees (£10,000) for his homeward-bound passengers.] Hickey (IV, 377) was presented in addition with 'a large easy chair intended for my cabin, which John Wilton, Esquire, of Patna, had caused to be made under his own immediate supervision and forwarded to me with an elegant letter in Latin.' Wilton, like Hickey, was an old Westminster. He was the son of Joseph Wilton, R.A. (1722–1803), the sculptor and brother of Lady Chambers, and came out to Bengal as a writer in 1775. In 1789 he was Sheriff of Calcutta. Sleeman (*Rambles and Recollections*. Oxford edn., p. 341) says that he was commonly known as Beau Wilton. 'He was the Honourable Company's opium agent at Patria when I arrived at Dinapore to join my regiment in 1810. He had a splendid house and lived in excellent style: and . . . complained that year, as I am told, that he had not been able to save more than a hundred thousand rupees that season out of his salary and commission upon the opium purchased by the Government from the cultivators.' Although he seems to have remembered his Latin, Sleeman tells the story of a ridiculous mistake occasioned by his ignorance of the vernacular of the country, in which he had then spent thirty-five years.

But he seems to have regretted his choice, for he writes:[88]

'I have tried both (roundhouse and great cabin). and from that experience never would recommend any person to put himself between decks if accommodation can be had above. The objections to the roundhouse are the frequent noises that must occur upon the poop from the seaman performing the necessary manoeuvres with the sails attached to the mizen-mast, especially that of working the spanker boom, and the feeding of the poultry kept in coops there, with the consequent pecking twice a day; and both points undoubtedly are extremely unpleasant and great annoyances.

'But on the gun deck, if you avoid the noises above specified, they are more than counterbalanced by a variety of inconveniences, the grand one that of being completely debarred of all daylight in tempestuous weather by what is very expressively termed 'the dead lights' being then fixed in to all the windows, in order to prevent the sea breaking in; which nevertheless it does not effectually do, for I was often set afloat in my cabin by heavy seas breaking against those deadlights and entering at the seams, especially so at the quarter gallery door and window, where it poured in in torrents beating even over my bed.

You have also at times the horrid screeches and crying of children going home (as it is called, though born in India) for education or what is full as bad, their vociferous mirth when playing their gambols in the steerage: added to which grievances is frequently being poisoned by a variety of stinks, and that notwithstanding the Company's ships are considered and certainly with truth as being remarkable for their cleanliness, being regularly purified twice a week by a complete washing of deck from the forecastle to the aftermost part: and last but not least of the evils, the perpetual creaking of bulk heads, accompanied by the *music* of the rudder working; all which unpleasant circumstances are avoided by being in the upper cabin or roundhouse.'

Ozias Humphry, the painter, who went home in the *Earl of Oxford* (Captain John White, junior) in March 1787, has given us the dimensions of 'the third mate's cabin', which he occupied: 'nine feet and a half long by eight feet and a half deep from the front to the door.' But he had it to himself; whereas, when George Elers, a young subaltern in the 12th Foot, came out to India in 1796 on board the *Rockingham* (Captain the Hon. Hugh Lindsay), he was

obliged to share a cabin twelve feet square with ten others, four of them sleeping in slung hammocks and the other seven in standing cots.[39] Hickey's cabin, let us hope, was larger; yet when he went down to 'the Dock of the Messieur's Kidd,'[40] where the *Castle Eden* was 'securely lodged,' he was 'astonished at finding the cabin I was to have, so confined and small.' He had 'quite forgotten the dimensions of an East Indiaman, for the Messieurs Kidd both assured me her great cabin was larger by ten inches in width than any other ship of the same burthen' (818 tons), 'and that it had the further material advantage of being six inches higher than great cabins usually are.'

It was necessary to furnish the cabin, for outward bound passengers removed what they had brought out for use on shore. Emma Roberts, whose *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindustan* made their appearance in 1835, goes as far as to say (p. 4) that 'little is required for the house besides the furniture which has been used for the cabin on board ship.' Mr. Peter Cherry, a well known Madras civilian and pay-master to the forces at the storming of Seringapatam in 1799,[41] wrote home in this fashion to his three daughters in 1821, upon hearing of their intention to embark for Madras in the *General Harris* Indiaman under the charge of Captain George Welstead:

[39] *Memoirs of George Elers*, 1777 *to* 1842: edited by Lord Morson (London 1903), p. 45.

[40] Hickey, IV, 358–9. James and Robert Kyd were the sons by an Indian mother of Colonel Kyd of the Bengal Engineers, who died in Calcutta on 27 May 1793, and whose share in the laying out of the Botanical Gardens is commemorated by an urn at the end of the palmetto avenue leading from the rivergate. The brothers purchased the dockyard at Kidderpore in 1807 and built many ships. James Kyd died on 26 October 1836 at the age of fifty. His grave in the Scottish cemetery at Kurryah bears no inscription; but the name of Kyd Street perpetuates the memory of the family.

[41] Cherry was killed in a carriage accident at the Cape of Good Hope on 20 November, 1823. One of his brothers George Frederick Cherry, was Persian Secretary to Lord Cornwallis and subsequently resident at Benares where he was assassinated on 14 January, 1799, under the orders of Wazir Ali. Mountstuart Elphinstone was his assistant at the time. He was an artist of some merit and painted the portrait of Tippoo Sultan which hangs in the Finance Committee Room at the India Office. Another brother, John Hector Cherry, was member of Council at Bombay, where he died on 4 June, 1803.

'Your cabin furniture, if it has no other recommendation, is English and will always have a value increasing in proportion to your length of absence from England. I have now most of my cabin furniture which I bought in 1811.'

In a memorandum which he drew up to provide for their comfort on board ship and to regulate their conduct during the voyage, Mr. Cherry gave a list of the cabin furniture which he regarded as essential: 'I will suppose, my dear children, that you are properly supplied with every necessary for the voyage and provided with a comfortable cabin: half the roundhouse of a regular Indiaman of not less than 800 tons, wherein will be abundance of room for your piano, harp, etc., hanging lamp and candles, 2 or 3 small bureaus with bookshelves on them, 2 or 3 sea couches with drawers to convert into sofas in the daytime, a washhand stand with two pewter guglets and two pewter basons, foot tub and three chairs, all well cleated and secured before you proceed on board . . . Let me add that nothing is so indelicate, indeed so indecent, as from the windows of ladies' cabins to see anything towing overboard or being hung out to dry: neither is anything more severely censured than loud talking, dancing over the heads of those in the great cabin, thus indelicately attracting the attention of persons in the next cabin or cuddy.'[42]

[For most of the seventeenth century the Company gave free passages in its ships to persons entertained in its service as factors and writers, as also to officers accompanying soldiers for its garrisons.[43] But in January 1684, the Court of Directors decided that factors and writers should in future pay the cost of their diet and transit to India.[44] They had previously to pay for their wives and maids or

[42] *Annals of an Anglo-Indian Family* (privately printed): by Sir Malcolm Morris, K.C.V.O., the youngest of the fifteen children of Rosanna Curtis Cherry, one of the young ladies who married John Carnac Morris of the Madras Civil Service. [Another of them, Susan, who married James Minchin, Master in the Supreme Court at Madras, was Sir Evan Cotton's great-grandmother].

[43] cf. *Ct. Min.*, 1674–6, p. 353, and 1677–9, p. 239, as to passages on the Company's account.

[44] Ct. Books, vol. XXXIII, p. 214, Minute of 2 January, 1684.

'black women' accompanying them as servants; and this continued.[45] Persons not in the Company's service, who had passages in its ships allowed them, had to come to an arrangement with the commanders as to the amount they paid; and (as has been seen) with a good demand for these they could make a large profit over the business. In the case of passengers in the Company's service, however, the cost was controlled by fixing limits according to their rank, at any rate towards the end of the eighteenth century. Thus in 1792 Thomas Twining got his passage in the Indiaman *Ponsborne* for £100, as against the limit of £110 in subsequent regulations. 'This sum,' he writes,[46]

> entitled me to a place at the Captain's table; for there was another table for passengers, at which the third mate or officer, of the ship presided, and indeed provided [extras] at his expense, where the charge was considered less.

The rules, therefore, in force in 1792 must have substantially conformed with those laid down on 11 July 1810,[47] which continued for many years. These enjoined that for the voyage from England 'commanders be not permitted to demand more than the undermentioned sums for the passage and accommodation at their tables, of gentlemen proceeding to India in the Company's service at their own expense': general officers £250, gentlemen of council or colonels, £200, lieutenant-colonels, majors, senior and junior merchants and factors, £150, captains £125.' They were, further, 'absolutely restrained' from demanding more than £110 from writers and subalterns, or

[45] cf. Ct. Miscellanies, 1707–10, vol. II, pp. 351–7, and vol. III, pp. 337–51.

[46] Twining, p. 2.

[47] Printed in Hardy (1820), App., 72–5. In 1776, the rates allowed were £50 lower for all ranks down to majors or senior and junior merchants, except that Lieutenant-colonels had to pay £120. Factors and captains might be charged £80, and writers, lieutenants and ensigns £70. Married ladies paid according to the ranks of their husbands, and single ladies at the rate charged for writers; while a cadet could not be charged more than £50. (Co's despatch to Bombay, 5 April, 1776, cited in Bombay District Gazetteer, XXVI, pt. ii, p. 11). These rates are stated to be enhanced because commanders of ships had to pay their owners £15, instead of £10 as formerly, for each passenger, and on account of a considerable rise in 'the price of every necessary,' so the previous rates must have been still lower.

£95 from assistant surgeons and cadets. Third mates were 'likewise restrained' from demanding more than £55 from any assistant surgeon or cadet 'who may proceed to India in their mess.' The rates for officers in the King's service down to subalterns were £15 less, owing to that sum being paid by the Company as the charter-party allowance to the owners.

For the voyage from India payment was made in Bengal in sicca rupees, in Madras in Arcot rupees, in Bombay in Bombay rupees.[*48] A lieutenant-colonel, or a major, returning to Europe 'either on sick certificate or on military duty' paid Rs. 2,500, a captain Rs. 2,000, and a subaltern Rs. 1,500.[49] 'Upon no account' were commanders to refuse to accept these sums for passage and accommodation; and they were 'constrained,' if the ship was a 'regular' one, to receive at least two such officers and to appropriate for their accommodation 'the larboard third part of the great cabin, with the passage to the quarter-gallery taken off.' If she was an 'extra' ship, one such officer must be received on board, and accommodated with 'a cabin on the starboard side, abaft the chief mate's cabin, and abreast of the spirit room, of not less dimensions than seven feet long and six feet wide.' For factors and writers the rate was Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 1,500.

The catering for the passengers was another of the commander's perquisites. Meals were taken in the cuddy. On the first day out each person took his seat 'in the station to be retained during the voyage.' The captain sat in the middle of the table, fronting the windows that looked

*[48] The sicca rupee weighed 192 grains and contained 176 grains of pure silver: the Arcot rupee varied from 171 to 177 grains in weight, and from 160 to 170 of pure silver: the Bombay rupee was adapted from that of Surat, and from 1800 its weight was 178 grains and its pure silver nearly 165 grains (*Hobson-Jobson*, pp. 775, 835).

[49] These are the rates given by Milburn, 1, 260, and Chatterton, pp. 231–2, but Hardy, edn. 1820, App., p. 73, shows them as Rs. 2400 for a lt.-col., Rs. 1800 for a major, Rs. 1512 for a capt., and Rs. 1500 for a subaltern: so presumably they were altered accordingly after 1813. The 'Bombay Calendar and Register' for 1826, at p. 14 of the Appendix, shows that this change was made under orders of the Company (Military Department) dated 15 December, 1819.

to the quarterdeck, and the two principal ladies were placed on his right and left hand. The chief and second officers, the surgeon, and the purser messed, as a rule, in the cuddy. The other officers and the 'guinea pigs,' or midshipmen, usually made up a mess of their own, to which the junior passengers were allotted.[50]

The quality of the fare at the captain's table naturally varied. It was certainly plentiful on board the Company's ship *Sir Edward Hughes* (Captain James Urmston), which took Lady Anne Barnard and her husband Andrew Barnard — the newly appointed Colonial Secretary under Lord Macartney — out to the Cape in 1797. They sailed from Portsmouth on 22 February and landed on 4 May with Lord Macartney, who had made his passage in H.M.S. *Trusty*. Lady Anne records that the menu for one dinner consisted of pease soup, roast leg of mutton, hogs' puddings, two fowls, two hams, two ducks, corned round of beef, mutton pies, pork pies, mutton chops, stewed cabbage, and potatoes, 'removed by an enormous plum pudding' and washed down with porter, spruce beer, port wine, sherry, gin, rum, etc.' All this was for sixteen passengers.

Captain Urmston grew his own mustard and cress on a frame stretched with damp flannel, of which Lady Anne provides a sketch.[51] John Macdonald makes mention of the same luxury. 'When they were on the coast of Malabar making for Bombay, Captain Savage one morning sent the commodore twelve hot rolls for breakfast and for dinner a fine salad, which 'grew in two little gardens on the hindcorners of the poop.'[52]

[Another feature of an Indiaman which deserves mention was its 'farm-yard' of livestock, of which the turkeys and other domestic fowl were kept on the poop. Captain

[50] This second mess (as already mentioned, p. 73) was generally run by the third mate. cf. Hickey, II, 103, and the passage from Williamson, cited by Parkinson, pp. 286–7.

*[51] *Lady Anne Barnard at the Cape*, opp. p. 15.

*[52] Macdonald, p. 111.

Marryat in his novel *Newton Forster* gives a graphic description of the scene spreading over other parts of the ship and covering also closely-wedged sheep, goats, pigs, calves, rabbits, and milch-cows. Though this improved the fare available for officers and passengers, it had its drawback. Thus Heber said the poop would have been no bad place for air, study, or recreation, but for the 'vile stench from the wretched imprisoned fowls whose hen-coops cover it'; and he condemns their being 'packed like bottles in a rack with hardly any room to stir.'[53] A further source of discomfort from smells was the painting of the ship, so as to smarten her up shortly before she reached her port of destination.][54]

In the memorandum from which a quotation has already been made, Mr. Peter Cherry gives detailed instructions to his daughters on the subject of their dietary and deportment at table. The dinner hour in those days (1821) on board ship was three o'clock, and the young ladies were advised to 'confine their wants to plain roast or boiled meats and vegetables.' Pastry was not good on board ship. Not more than two glasses of wine were to be taken, 'and when you drink beer, do not drink any wine at all.' Moderation in eating fruit was recommended and pineapples in particular were to be avoided 'as very injurious to health.'[55] If 'agreeably to the custom of the world' an invitation to drink wine came from the gentlemen sitting near, 'politeness will of course induce the acceptance of the request, but this must be done by keeping a little wine in the glass so as not to exceed the quantity above-mentioned.'

Divine service on deck (says Mr. Cherry) should not be attended by ladies, unless there was a regular clergyman on board. 'It is too frequent that the person appointed to read the service considered it foreign to his employ and contrary to his inclinations, and you will benefit more by reading the

[53] Lubbock, pp. 69–70; Parkinson, pp. 231–2; Heber, I, xxiii–iv.

[54] Heber, I, lvii.

[*55] William Hickey (IV, 230) attributes the death of Rose Aylmer on 2 March, 1800, to 'over-indulgence with that mischievous and dangerous fruit, the pineapple.'

prayers in your cabin.'[56] On no account was an invitation to play at cards or backgammon to be accepted.

If exercise on deck was taken, the arm of a gentleman was considered to be necessary in walking, 'from the motion of the ship'; but the young ladies must be 'particularly guarded in not walking long, let the conversation be general, and always have one of your sisters on your other arm, and the third sister *must* remain in the cabin.' Dancing was strictly forbidden: and the poop must never be invaded 'whatever others may do.' There was nothing new about this advice to avoid male society. Mrs. Fay brought out three young ladies with her to Calcutta in 1784 and writes: 'We were only five times on deck during the passage owing to a previous arrangement between the captain and me, to guard against imprudent attachments which are more easily formed than broken; and I am happy to say the plan succeeded according to our wish.'[57]

A voyage under such conditions must have been as dismal for the young ladies as a voyage without smoking for men. Yet in some ships that solace of monotony was taboo. Hickey (IV, 7) tells us that his friend Captain John Pascall Larkins refused to permit smoking of any description on board the *Warren Hastings* (the first of her name),

[56] Though (as shown at pp. 40–3 *ante*) the Company's ships did not ordinarily carry a chaplain at any rate up to 1773, its sailing orders usually included words enjoining the commander to 'keep up the worship of God aboard his ship' (e.g. *Ct. Min.*, 1674–6, pp. 35, 164, 391; 1677–9 pp. 127, 240). But according to Capt. Hutchinson, who wrote in 1781 (see p. 41, *ante* and p. 289 of his book) the only worship in Indiamen was that 'for two or three Sundays, when we drew near the Cape of Good Hope, we had prayers, which ceased after we passed the Cape,' i.e. because of the fear of approaching danger. Even this minimum of divine worship was not observed in 1765–66 when James Forbes made his first voyage to India (*Memoirs*, edn. 1813, I, 11–12). By 1821, when Cherry gave his instructions to his daughters, observance of divine worship on Sundays had no doubt become more regular, especially as the Company's instructions to the captain of a ship imposed a fine of two guineas for each omission to hold the service without satistory reasons for it recorded in his log-book (Hardy's Register, edn. 1820, App., p. 97). Thus Bishop Heber, who travelled to India in the following year, describes (*Narrative*, I, pp. xx–xxi) the good arrangements made by the commander for his conducting the Sunday morning service on board, and says (pp. xlii–iii) that most commanders were 'anxious to keep up at least the appearance of religion.'

[57] *Letters of Mrs. Fay* (Forster's edition), p. 231.

but that, finding on his voyage from Calcutta to Madras in the cold weather of 1790 that he had neglected to direct his officers to prevent the admission of hookahs and that Captain Colebrooke[58] and four of his friends had brought them on board, 'he deemed it better to let them continue than to give offence by putting a stop to them.'

*[58] R. H. Colebrooke, who published, in 1807, a series of sketches of events connected with the fall of Seringapatam. He was 'attending the army in the capacity of surveyor' (cf. Phillimore, *Historical Record*, I, 48–9, 328).

CHAPTER THREE

The Indiaman's Sailors

MOST of the material in the previous chapters relates to officers and passengers in an Indiaman. It would leave an incomplete picture of life aboard unless something more be said about the service conditions of the petty officers and seamen who played such an important part in the working of the ship. Fortunately there is an authentic record on the subject in the Journal written by Edward Barlow, a seaman who served in eight of the Company's ships between 1669 and 1703. Though it is not a day-to-day diary, it gives a good account of his voyages and is illustrated with pictures, some in colour, of ships and places drawn by him; of these several are reproduced in *Barlow's Journal*.[1]

Barlow was the son of a very poor husbandman, living within four miles of Manchester, and part of his early life is worth mentioning for the glimpse it gives of prevailing conditions under which some seamen were then recruited. He was born in 1642 and had little education, for he did not learn to write till after he went to sea. Resisting all his parents' attempts to apprentice him to a local trade, at the age of fifteen his spirit of adventure made him run away to London, where he stayed for two years in the service of an uncle who kept the 'Dog and Bear' at Southwark. He had a strong desire to go to sea, but there were difficulties

[1] Published by Hurst and Blackett, 1934. Three of Barlow's pictures, viz., the coloured ones of Bombay, Calicut, and the mouth of the R. Tapti near Surat, are also reproduced in colours in *The English Factories in India*, N.S., vol. I.

in the way. It would have been easier in the reign of Queen Anne, when an Act of 1705 (2 and 3 Ann., cap. 6) empowered the parish authorities to send to service at sea any pauper boy above the age of ten, and bind him as an apprentice for it until he became twenty-one;[2] but Barlow's youth was passed in the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. It was only because his uncle had a friend in the Navy Office that in 1659, when a lad of seventeen, he succeeded in being apprenticed to the chief mate of the man-of-war *Naseby*, for the usual term of seven years.[3] For the whole of this time his wages went (quite legally) to his master.[4] That was not so unfair as it might seem, for the master and mistress had to maintain him when he was ashore; and it was largely owing to friction over work given him by his mistress on such occasions that they heartily disliked each other. Barlow thought he ought to be allowed a few weeks' leisure after his hard work at sea, while his mistress hated to see him idle.[5] In addition, the master had to furnish his apprentice with a chest and his clothes at sea; and these might easily be lost if (as once happened to Barlow) he was accidentally left behind by his ship, or was 'pressed' into a ship-of-the-line.[6] The master was also supposed to teach him the art of navigation; this was neglected in Barlow's case, but was generally enforced in an Indiaman.[7]

In 1660 he was serving in the *Naseby* when she brought King Charles II from Holland to England, accompanied by Admiral Sir Edward Montagu (later Earl of Sandwich) and his secretary Samuel Pepys.[8] He went in another ship-of-the-line on an expedition under Montagu against the Barbary

[2] cf. Hannay, *Ships and Men*, pp. 281–2.

[3] Barlow, pp. 29–31. In an Indiaman it was probably still more difficult to secure an apprenticeship; thus in 1674 the apprentices were said to be mostly sons of M.P.s, noblemen, or the richest merchants in London (*Carré*, III, 681–2).

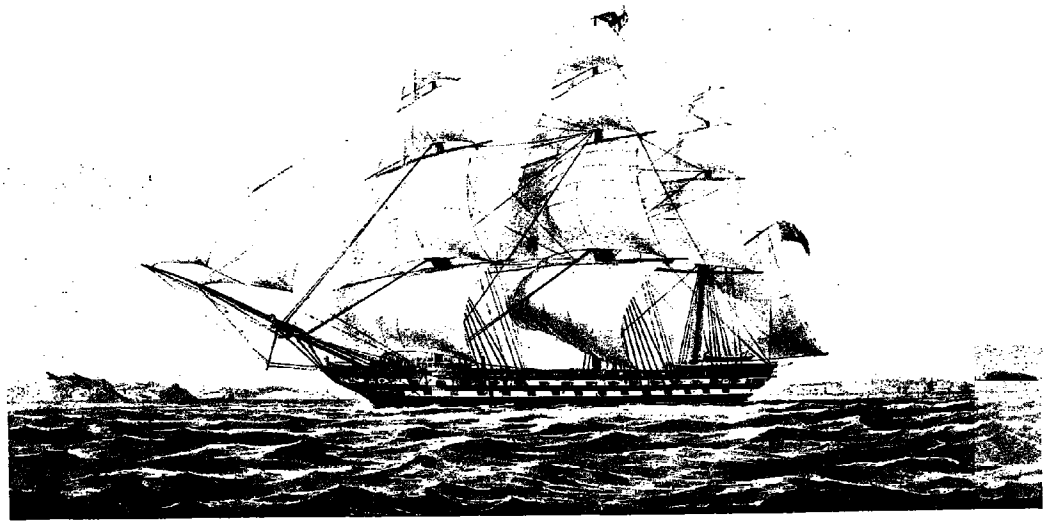
[4] cf. Barlow, pp. 89, 90–1, 93, 115, 129, 130.

[5] Ibid., pp. 38, 48, 75, 76.

[6] Ibid., pp. 32, 41, 76, 97, 129.

[7] Barlow, pp. 29, 30; Carré, III, 682–3.

[8] Barlow, pp. 42–5.



3 The *Earl Balcarres*, built in Bombay, 1815 (*see* p. 46).
By courtesy of The Parker Gallery, London.

pirates in 1661–3; and after making a voyage in a merchantman to Brazil and back in 1662–3, he was transferred in 1664 from another merchantship to the frigate *Monke*. He served at the battle of Lowestoft in 1665, as well as the less successful four days' fight with the Dutch fleet in June 1666, in which he was slightly wounded. He remained in that ship till November 1667, having meanwhile served his full time as an apprentice.[9] A voyage in 1668 to the Canary Islands ended with his being 'pressed' into the frigate *Yarmouth*, in which he had another cruise in the Mediterranean lasting to the spring of 1669.[10]

Barlow thus had some ten years' experience at sea when he shipped in the Indiaman *Experiment* for his first voyage to India. He says the main inducement was his wish 'to see strange countries' and that statement is corroborated by his accepting less pay than the 26s. a month he had had in the *Monke*. In the *Experiment* his monthly pay was only 22s., as is shown by an entry in extant accounts that he, like other sailors in her, received £2 4s. as advance for two months on 1 February 1670.[11]

The ship returned from her voyage in mid-July 1671, and on 24 August he was paid £16 16s. 7d. for the remainder of his wages.[12] He continued in her for her next voyage to Bantam and China, for which he received slightly higher wages, viz. 25s. a month as a quartermaster.[13] It ended, unfortunately,[14] in the ship being captured by the Dutch off Sumatra in December 1672, when she was returning from China in entire ignorance of the outbreak of war between

[9] cf. Barlow, pp. 102–7, 117–25, 129, 138; Bryant, *Samuel Pepys*, I, 233–4, 291–3.

[10] Barlow, pp. 145–6, 172–3.

[11] I.O. Marine Records, Misc. No. 14, p. 11; cf. pp. 7, 8; Carré, III, 683.

[12] Misc. No. 14, p. 29. As the ship had sailed on 7 March, 1670, the voyage lasted for about sixteen months; so that the total wages received in England amounted to £19, or an average of £1 3s. 8d. a month. The difference of 1s. 8d. a month may be due to pay for the time served before the ship left the Downs and from her return there up to the date of her reaching the dock where she was to be refitted (Barlow pp. 202–3).

[13] Misc. No. 14, pp. 33, 36; Barlow, pp. 205, 251.

[14] On the other hand it was fortunate, as it enabled Barlow to start his Journal (p. 228).

the two countries (pp. 151–2 *post*). Barlow thus became a prisoner-of-war, and it was not till November 1674 that he reached London again. Though he had served for over a year in the *Experiment* before her capture, he received no further pay on his return, except a compassionate allowance of two months' pay (50s.) in addition to a similar amount that had been paid at his request to his sister during the voyage.[15]

In the present day this seems very unjust treatment of a seaman, but it was in accordance with English marine law up to the passing of the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 (17 and 18 Vict., cap. 104). The case was governed by the principle then recognised by the courts that 'freight is the mother of wages.' Under that phrase a seaman's right to wages depended on the ship's earning of freight, so that, if she were lost or taken before the end of the voyage, or at any rate before her arrival at her destination for delivery of the cargo, the mariners lost all claim to wages. Even where the owners sent a ship to sea in an unseaworthy condition and the voyage had in consequence to be abandoned, it was held that the seamen in her could not sue for wages, as no freight was earned. And where a seaman was impressed from a merchantship and subsequently she was lost before any freight was earned, he could not recover his wages up to the time of impressment; nor, even if a ship that had been taken was recaptured and brought to her destination, could he get any wages, unless she earned her freight, which would be impossible if her cargo had been lost as prize. Moreover as the seaman's lien for wages was only upon the freight and not the cargo, the fact of the cargo being insured by the owners against loss was held to make no difference.[16] And the law added to this injustice

[15] *Ct. Min.*, 1674–6, pp. 71, 94; Barlow, p. 251.

[16] *Dunkley v. Bulwer*, 6 Esp. 86, and other cases cited in Mew's Digest (1926), cols. 118–22. MacLachlan's *Law of Merchant Shipping*, 6th edn. p. 170, says that the principle in question had produced such hardship and injustice as to drive the courts to refinements for the purpose of evading its application to the unfortunate seamen.

by differentiating the case of the Master from that of the seaman, for the principle of wages depending on freight was held not to apply to him.[17]

The Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, erased this rule, with the proviso that, in all cases of wreck or loss, proof that 'a seaman had not exerted himself to the utmost to save the ship' should bar his claim to wages.[18] But in 1674 the East India Company had the law on their side, and their grant of a special allowance of three months' pay to the married men (of which two-thirds were to go to their wives or widows), and of two months' pay to the unmarried men, in the *Experiment* was only 'out of compassion' and in the hope that 'it may conduce to the Company's service, and to the encouragement of those in their employ.'[19]

When Barlow took his next East India voyage in 1682, he was aged forty, and had risen from the rating of common seaman to gunner in 1675, boatswain at 40s. a month in 1677, second mate at 55s. in the same year, and finally in 1679 to chief mate. So he shipped in the Indiaman *Delight* as chief mate. on £6 5s. a month. But before coming to this voyage, it is fitting to notice his grievances as an ordinary seaman. These mostly cover all ships and not only Indiamen.

He more than once makes an unfavourable comparison between the hard lot of 'a poor seaman in want' and that of even beggars in England, who generally had 'better victuals than we could get' and were able 'at night to lie quiet out of danger in a good barn full of straw, nobody disturbing them, and might lie as long as they pleased,' whereas (giving a vivid picture of a sailor's trials at night)—

[17] *Hawkins v. Twizell* (1856) 25 L.J. Q.B. 160—a case where the ship was lost at sea. It is true that the law on the point was doubtful prior to this decision and Addison (see p. 162 *post*) states that the captain and officers were equally liable to forfeit their wages, but the basis of the decision, viz., the reasons given for differentiating between the master and crew, was mostly of equal application to the period before Victorian legislation.

[18] These provisions continue in force under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, sec. 157.

[19] *Ct. Min.*, 1674–6, p. 94. A similar grant was given in the case of four othe ships lost or taken: ibid, p. 113.

'it was quite contrary with us, for we seldom in a month got our bellyful of victuals, and that of such salt as many beggars would think scorn to eat; and at night when we went to take our rest, we were not to lie still above four hours; and many times when it blew hard were not sure to lie one hour, yea, often (we) were called up before we had slept half an hour and forced to go up into the main-top or foretop to take in our topsails, half awake and half asleep, with one shoe on and the other off, not having time to put it on; always sleeping in our clothes for readiness; and in stormy weather, when the ship rolled and tumbled as though some great millstone were rolling up one hill and down another, we had much ado to hold ourselves fast by the small ropes from falling by the board; and being gotten up in the tops, there we must haul and pull to make fast the sail, seeing nothing but air above us and water beneath us, and that so raging as though every wave would make a grave for us; and many times so dark that we could not see one another, and blowing so hard that we could not hear one another speak, (though) being close to one another; and thundering and lightening as though heaven and earth would come together, it being usual in those countries, with showers of rain so hard that it will wet a man 'dunge wet' before he can go the length of the ship.'

He then points out that, even in calm weather, the ships and seamen's lives were in danger of fire or sudden explosion from powder being set aflame, as could easily happen through carelessness, or they were in danger of sinking and drowning from the ship springing a leak, 'so that all the pumps and inventions that they can make cannot keep her free from imminent danger.'[20]

Of victuals at sea, Barlow has many hard things to say, both in the navy and in merchantmen. Thus in H.M.S. *Yarmouth* (1668)—

'we had nothing to our Christmas dinner but a bit of old rusty salt beef, which had lain in pickle eighteen or twenty months, and a piece of it for three men, about three-quarters of a pound, which was picked out of all the rest, for the officers having the first choice always, nothing was left for the poor men but the surloin next to the horns, and they have Hobson's choice; and if they do but speak against it, then they are in danger of being drubbed or beaten with twenty or thirty blows on the back, and a poor man dare not

[20] Barlow, pp. 60–1.

speak for that which is his right, for the captain and purser and other officers having the best of all things, a poor man is not to be heard among them, but must be content to take what they will give him, they many times putting that into their pockets which is a poor man's due. And if you go to complain to any higher powers, then will the officer's word be heard before yours, and you must be condemned to what punishment they think fitting: many times poor men's lives being taken away for speaking for what is their due; and so you may hear what hard trouble and misery a poor seaman must go through.'[21]

Likewise in H.M.S. *Augustaine* (a vessel taken from the Dutch), at Cadiz in 1661, instead of proper pie or roast beef, or plum 'podich,' his Christmas dinner was[22]

'nothing but a little bit of Irish beef for four men, which had lain in pickle two or three years and was as rusty as the Devil, with a little stinking oil or butter, which was all colours of the rainbow.'

Again he grumbles at the beverage of wine and water supplied to the fleet in the Mediterranean (1661), saying 'sometimes the wine is as sour as vinegar, and [beer being finished], we must drink that or nothing,' for the purser did not supply, as His Majesty allowed, wine that would turn four or five butts of water into the 'beverage' but bought cheap, sour wine, which 'will make fourteen to one . . . and putteth the rest of the money into his pocket.'[23] Similarly, he complains of the commander of an Indiaman 'many times pinching men extremely in their bellies.'[24] Thus in the last voyage he did in 1702–3, he states that the Company's ship *Fleet Frigate* 'kept a very pitiable table and seldom above one meal a day, and that very ordinary.' The captain also made money by selling the beer out of the ship at Batavia and buying arrack which he disposed of, as he pleased, so that he made them drink water all the time they were in China, being 'much like all other commanders, to gain what they can by hook or crook.'[25]

To enable men to buy extra provisions abroad pursers in the navy would sometimes advance money out of wages

[21] Barlow, pp. 161–2. [22] Ibid., p. 68. [23] Barlow, pp. 53–4.
[24] Ibid., p. 352. [25] Ibid., pp. 359–40.

due, or provide clothes out of his slop-chest which they would sell ashore. Barlow says the purser would make a handsome commission on the slops by booking 10s. for things worth 7s. in England.[26] Yet he declares (1692) that the King's ships were better victualled than most merchantmen; and (as was usual in those days) the ordinary fare for the crew in an Indiaman consisted of dry biscuit and salt beef or pork, boiled in salt water.[27]

Unsuitable food and drink led to much disease among sailors, especially the 'bloody flux' (dysentery), which in eastern climes took a steady toll of deaths, and which (Barlow adds) 'is seldom helped [cured] and killeth a lusty strong man in ten days.' He himself had a bad attack of it in the *Experiment* in 1671, and speaks of the disadvantages of those days—

> 'the sea being an uncomfortable and bad place for sick men, and many are the miseries that poor seamen endure, . . . having small means to comfort themselves with, for they cannot run and fetch what meat and drink they think will do them good,'

such as fresh fruit and roots, but must take the ordinary fare on board. He also complains of the surgeons and doctors in ships often being 'careless of a poor man in his sickness,'

> 'their common phrase being to come to him and take him by the hand when they hear that he hath been sick two or three days and feeling his pulses when he is half dead, asking him when he was at stool and how he feels himself, and how he has slept, and then giving him some of their medicines upon the point of a knife, which doeth as much good to him as a blow upon the pate with a stick.'[28]

If a seaman survived the voyage, there might be long delay, before he received his wages, which in a merchantman were promised him only 'if all prove well,' so that

[26] Barlow, pp. 151–2, 169–70.

[27] Ibid., pp. 213, 265, 426, 462. Even as late as 1769 bread was not customarily provided in an Indiaman. (Hickey, I, 150).

[28] Barlow, pp. 209, 213–4.

the sailors could not be sure of their pay 'before they have it in their pockets, for when they come home, if there be any damage then in the goods, though against all reason, their wages must pay for it.' This was a grievance which, according to Barlow, lay on English seamen alone in all Christendom, and it was a serious one.[29] Thus after his voyage to Brazil in the *Queen Catherine* (1663) her commander and owners proposed to deduct three pounds from each man's wages for goods that had been damaged, due (they said) to bad stowage and negligent care of them. Such damage, however, (writes Barlow) generally arises in

> 'many other ways . . . stormy weather being the chief . . . and sometimes also by old and leaky ships, which are much strained in bad weather, springing leaks that could not be stopped before they were laden; and many times by filling a ship fuller of goods than she could carry; and also goods many times come on board damnified with not being carefully packed up through the negligence of many servants and packers; and when the owners thereof see that there is damage, and fear to lose thereby, then they lay the fault on the poor seamen that sail the ships, and they must stand the damage; whereas they can better lose a pound than a poor seaman a penny, who taketh so much pains for very small gains, which is a thing the unreasonablest that is allowed in England, and no other nation doth the like of.'

In this case the sailors were both plucky and lucky, for Barlow and the others refused to take anything but their full wages, and combined to put their objections in 'Doctors Commons,' where they succeeded in recovering the whole sum claimed by them, 'for the goods that were damaged were proved to be Portuguese merchants' goods, and therefore no damage from seamen and no English goods.'[30]

It seems probable that the Portuguese ownership of the damaged goods was held to take the case out of the ordinary rule of English maritime law, which justified such a

[29] Barlow, pp. 165–66. As to troublesome delay in the payment of wages at the East India House, cf. the remarks of William Hodges, stout champion of 'oppressed' seamen, in his 'proposals for relief, etc. of the Loyal Seamen of England,' printed in 1695 (No. 40 of 'Pamphlets' marked 217 in the Bodleian Library, p. 45).

[30] Barlow, pp. 89–91.

deduction on the principle already mentioned that 'freight is the mother of wages.' Thus a book on Admiralty law and customs, published in 1746, lays down[31] that if goods are so embezzled or so damnified that 'the ship's crews must answer, the owners and Master must deduct the same out of the wages of the mariners; for tho' freight is the Mother of Wages, yet it is the very Father of Damages. For before the mariners can claim the wages out of what the ship has earned, the ship must be acquitted for the damage that the merchant hath sustained by the negligence or fault of the mariners; and the reason is that as the goods are obliged to answer the freight, so the freight and the ship is tacitly obliged to cleat the damage. Which being done, the mariners are then let into their wages.'

Substantially, Barlow's complaint was against the unreasonable extension of the seaman's liability for damage to cases other than that due to his wilful default; the latter is still laid down in sec. 225 of Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, by which a seaman can be ordered by a summary court to forfeit out of his wages a sum equal in amount to the loss caused by his wilfully damaging the ship or any of her stores or cargo. The same was provided in sec. 243 of corresponding Act of 1854; but under the previous law there seems to have been a disposition on the part of owners of ships and goods to make the seaman pay inequitably for mere supposed negligence.[32]

A dispute about this liability for damaged cargo would necessarily hold up payment of wages; and resort to a lawsuit, as in the case of the *Queen Catherine*, might also entail payment of some costs, though considerably less than those of the present day, e.g. in that case Barlow and his

[31] *'The Law, Ordinances and Institutions of the Admiralty of Great Britain.'* I, 202. The case of the *Queen Catherine* was probably held not to fall under this rule, because the *lex loci contractus* (here the Portuguese law) in the case of a contract made in Portuguese territory superseded the law of the ship's flag (i.e. English Law); cf. Maclachlan, *loc., cit.*, p. 310.

[32] This applies to an Indiaman: cf. Carré, who says (III, 681) on the authority of Captain Basse in 1674, that if any of the goods in the ship were spoilt the loss was deducted from the wages of the crew

comrades incurred 'only an angel [10s.] apiece.'[33] Similar delay would be caused by a dispute over stoppage of pay for recovery of fines imposed by the East India Company for unauthorised private trade, e.g. if the mariner disposed of goods which he had legitimately imported from abroad by private sale, instead of through the Company's warehouses. Barlow states that, in the case of some goods that he and others had brought from the Barbadoes in 1695, the fines demanded would have been near half their value. They had the trouble of petitioning the Company and soliciting the help of their friends — he was than a chief mate — in the matter before they could get a settlement, so that it took seven months before they received their due wages. He denounces as unreasonable that 'a poor man cannot have the liberty to dispose of what is his own without giving them [the Company] what they please'[34] — a plea that finds an echo in these days of restrictions.

There was, however, much to be said on the side of the Company. They had to help the customs officers in trying to prevent illicit concealment or disposal of goods imported in their ships by persons who wished to evade payment of customs-duty, as well as the charges the Company might rightly impose for freight, etc. If the importation of the goods was prohibited or the quantity imported exceeded the amount permitted to their servants including seamen, the Company might (instead of forfeiture of the goods) justly levy fines for the breach of their regulations.[35] And, on 19 February, 1674, as a check on infringement of this kind, they laid down rules under which goods brought home by seamen were to be stored in the Company's warehouse; but this entailed trouble, expense and delay to their owners. For instance, before any goods were delivered to them from the warehouse, they had to declare

[33] Barlow, p. 90.

[34] Barlow, p. 455.

[35] Instances of this will be found in *Ct. Min.*, 1671–3: see Index under 'trade private, fines imposed.' Also (Ibid., p. 173) freight had to be paid by any seaman who brought home more than his proper allowance of goods.

on oath that the things they claimed were their own and had been brought back on their own account; and if this was not done within sixty days of the ship's discharge, double fines were leviable.[36]

The trouble and expense involved were much increased by an Act of 1701 (11 and 12 Will. 3, cap. 3) which imposed an additional duty of fifteen per cent on muslins, silks and dyed or patterned calicoes, imported after 25 March, 1700, and required bonds to be given by the importers for its payment, also the goods to be warehoused and their value ascertained by public auction.[37] Barlow, on his return from a voyage in 1701, loudly complains of the excessive charges levied by the Company as entailing great hardship on their seamen's ventures, and of the delay of five or six months before they knew the value put on them and then only getting bonds for payment three months afterwards. All this, he said, made seamen very unwilling to go in the Company's service.[38] The procedure was obviously cumbersome and dilatory. Unfortunately it lasted in all its severity till 1803, when at last the inconvenience, damage and delay from it were recognised to the extent of exempting the case of persons bringing home goods or articles from China or India as presents or for private use, where a declaration of value, such as is customary today, was ordinarily accepted on proof to the satisfaction of the customs officer that they were not being imported by way of merchandise.[39]

The Company's 'encouragements' included one for rewarding a seaman who, whether in peace or war, prevented 'malicious damage' to its effects (p. 30); but the recovery of

[36] *Ct. Min.*, 1674–6, pp. 23–5; 1677–9, p. 226. For fines paid by Barlow under circumstances mentioned in this paragraph, see pp. 365, 385 of his Journal.

[37] The duty was continued in 1702 (12 and 13 Will. 3, cap. 11) and the provisions as to sale, etc., extended to unrated goods in 1705 (2 and 3 Ann. cap. 9).

[38] Barlow, pp. 527–8. Thus Barlow says (p. 517) that he bought in China silks that fetched £908 at the public sale, but after payment of duties and Company's charges he received only £454, also (p.527) that the charges on tea and lacquered ware he had imported, caused him a loss of over thirty per cent. The Company was authorised to deduct charges incurred by them, e.g. by 2 and 3 Ann. cap. 9, sec. 7; 33 Geo. 3, cap. 52, sec. 102; and 39 Geo. 3, cap. 59, sec. 9.

[39] 43 Geo. 3, cap. 68, sec. 21.

goods lost by shipwreck did not fall in this category. Thus Barlow and some others in the *Sampson* salvaged ten bales of the Company which had sunk from another Indiaman driven ashore at the Cape, 'hoping they would have given us something for saving their goods; but when we came home we found it to the contrary, and we got as much as if we had saved none at all, which was an unthankful part of them and they ought to be served in their kind.'[40]

Yet his three following voyages were in Indiamen (1695–1702), and though he grumbled about the Company's meanness and extortions, he evidently found its service worth while and was able to put by some savings.[41]

Discipline aboard was maintained by the usual rough methods of that period. The captain had autocratic power; he could even turn a man or officer out of the ship for alleged disobedience or other serious misconduct;[42] and it was very difficult for the victim to obtain redress for an unjust removal. Barlow, when chief mate, twice suffered in this way. In his third East India voyage (1683–4), when his ship *Delight* was at Achin, in Sumatra, he fell out with the captain, who got enraged—

> 'and words arising, he offered to strike me and took up a carpenter's adze, offering to cut me over the head; I seeing that, stepped and took hold of him, seeing him in such a rage and not knowing what damage he might do me, being somewhat stronger than he was, and asked him what he intended, to abuse me in that manner. So he presently called me a rogue and all other names, and said that I went to strike him; and he, being in such a passion [and] seeing he could not have his will of me, presently said I should not go out of the Road in the ship, and said that he would turn me ashore, which he presently did, causing me to take all my things along with me.'

[40] Barlow, pp. 429–30. The services were rendered without prior demand or acceptance by the Company, so that no lien for payment of salvage was created (cf. 47 L.J. 695); and the bales might also have been damaged by submersion.

[41] cf. his offers to buy a command (Barlow, pp. 501, 506).

[42] cf. Admiralty Laws (1746), I., 199; 'If a mariner shall commit a fault and the Master shall lift up the towel three times before any mariner and he shall not submit, the Master at the next place of land shall discharge him, and if he refuse to go ashore, he shall lose half his wages and all his goods within the ship.'

So he was forced into a boat and dismissed without a penny of what was due to him for the time he had served in the ships; and he was, under his bond to the Company, cut off from demanding his wages till she arrived in England, with all the goods safe ashore and the whole freight paid. Being penniless he had a make-shift existence out there until he got a passage on a private trading ship to Hugli, in Bengal. Here the Company's agent befriended him and gave him a vacant command of one of the homeward ships. On his return to England he petitioned the Company for compensation, but was told that he must go to law for it, if he could.[43] This he could not afford to do.

Similar trouble arose during his last voyage (1702–3) in the *Fleet Frigate*. The captain was a young man, who had been given the command after making only three voyages, and lacking the requisite experience he engaged Barlow as chief mate, with extra privileges, to pilot the ship to China and back. According to Barlow's account, the commander, when the ship was near Java, tried to cheat him over the contract, and in the subsequent quarrel he threatened to leave the chief mate behind at Batavia. This he did not dare to do, as he could not rely on his own ability to sail the ship to Whampoa. Further conflict ensued there, as well as in the return voyage, with the result that the captain ordered Barlow off the deck and out of his post as chief mate. At St. Helena the captain was in a better position to get rid of him, as the ship was to be escorted to England by H.M.S. *Kingfisher*, and he persuaded the latter's commander to take Barlow off as a passenger, with the almost certain loss of his wages for five months up to the time the *Fleet Frigate's* cargo was discharged.[44]

[43] Barlow, pp. 357–8, 359, 361, 365. A bad case occurred in 1722, when Captain Richard Benfield, commander of the Indiaman *Dawson*, then in Indian waters, dismissed no less than three of his mates. They were fortunate to get some redress on petitioning Governor Phipps and his Council at Bombay. They later held an enquiry, and though finding that the captain was justified in 'suspending' one of the mates, ordered him to pay Rs. 415 as damages to the complainants. (Bombay Public Proceedings, consultations of 7 Sept., 1722 and 3 January, 1723; Downing pp. 63, 86). (*Continued on p. 93*)

Barlow frankly admits that he was partly to blame in these quarrels, from his habit of plain-speaking and telling his superior officer what he thought of his behaviour.[46] And his temper once got him into serious trouble in England over his having struck a seaman several blows with a cane for disobeying a command. A few weeks later he died, though, according to Barlow, this had nothing to do with the assault, as the man was well for some ten days afterwards and had never complained to him about it. However some of his shipmates 'that had little love for me' (in Barlow's belief) instigated him to declare before his death that it was mainly due to the mate's beating him, and they made affidavits accordingly. On the ship's return to London, the widow threatened him and by pressure through a lawyer she employed, made him compound the matter for £55, so as to avoid a charge of manslaughter, which might result in his being sentenced to branding on the hand and confiscation of all his goods.[46]

Caning, though occasionally risky, was thus one of the methods of enforcing obedience, or preventing idleness, on board ship. Complaints by seamen of harsh treatment by their commanders and officers were not uncommon,[47] and even surgeons in an Indiaman were liable to acts of violence. For instance the commander of the *Hopewell* in 1643 admitted having used a rope's end on the ship's surgeon; and John Leckie, another surgeon, complained in 1692 that the captain had him tied up 'in order to ducking which is the next punishment unto death'[48] In the eighteenth century flogging became the usual punishment for serious offences against discipline, of which some instances have

(*Continued from p.92*)

[44] Barlow, pp. 530, 534–5, 539, 543–5, 546. An enactment of 1700 (11 and 12 Will. 3, cap. 7. sec. 7) rendered the master of a merchantman liable to three months' imprisonment, if he forced a member of his crew ashore, or wilfully left him behind; so the commander had to be more careful than the captain of the *Delight*. For another case of an officer in an Indiaman being ordered out of his post, cf. Hickey IV, 409, as to the similar suspension of a third mate in 1808.

[45] Barlow, p. 534. [46] Barlow, pp. 451–3.

[47] e.g. *Ct Min.* 1674–6, p. 84; 1677–9, pp. 212–3.

[48] Col. Crawford, *History of the Indian Medical Service*, II, 46, 47.

been given at pp. 60–1 In the nineteenth century more humane views began to prevail; and Bishop Heber who went out in the Indiaman *Thomas Grenville* in 1822, tells the story of her commander postponing an enquiry into a grave charge against one of his sailors till the next day, saying it had become the rule in the Company's service never to punish without a regular trial, or without some pause intervening between the accusation and the enquiry.[49]

Besides his power to turn men out of the ship for misconduct, the captain might also clear some off before a voyage began, on the ground that he had shipped more than he intended to carry. Barlow says the commander of the Indiaman *Wentworth* in 1699 turned away some nine men in this way; and though he paid them their wages up to date, it was naturally a great disappointment to them to lose the voyage, for which they had provided the customary necessities.[50]

Another subject of complaint was the purser's overcharging for supplies to seamen during a voyage. An instance of this mentioned by Barlow, when serving in H.M.S. *Yarmouth*, has already been given (p. 85). It also applied to Indiamen; and in 1677 the Company ordered that no seaman should be allowed to spend over a third of his wages in liquor, tobacco, clothes, or other necessaries during the voyage, and that pursers should not sell at a profit of more than 50 per cent on pain of dismissal. In 1679, however, complaints were still being made of the excessive rates put on all goods and provisions supplied to the men, and it was found that they continued to take up more than one-third of their wages in this way to their great impoverishment.[51]

Poverty indeed, it is to be feared, was often the end of a seaman's service in a merchantman; and though the Company's Poplar Fund existed for the relief of such cases,

[49] Heber, I, xxvii. [50] Barlow, p. 504.

[51] *Ct. Min.* 1677–9, pp. 62, 278–9, 312–3. The one-third rule continued to 1820 (Hardy, App., p. 27).

what it could afford was on a very small scale. Unless he was disabled in its service, so as to be entitled to a pension (p. 30), he (or his widow, if he was dead) could at most seek admission in the Poplar almshouses. But these had accommodation for only a dozen or so seamen or their widows; and at their fullest extent, when they were rebuilt about 1802, they could take no more than thirty-eight petty officers, seamen, or their widows. The fund ceased to exist in 1866, when the almshouses were pulled down.[52] Otherwise only small sums, such as £2 8s. a year for the maintenance of two orphans,[53] were given by the Company to applicants for help. This did not apply to ex-directors, commanders and officers, whose lot had fallen on evil days; in their case provision was made on a more generous scale.[54]

Barlow's position as a petty officer, in 1677, and a mate in later years permitted him to benefit by private trade; and he evidently had savings to support him. These, however, were insufficient to enable him to 'buy the goodwill' of the two owners of the Indiaman *Sceptre*, so as to get her permanent command in 1698, though he had acted as commander for over a year and had been confirmed as such by Sir John Gayer, Governor of Bombay.[55] In the following year he had arranged to pay £100 for the command of another Indiaman, and was actually accepted for that post by some of the Shipping Committee; but this was upset by Sir Josiah Child, the former Governor of the Company and one of her four owners, because (according to Barlow) of the influence of the wife of the Speaker of the House of Commons in favour of a former officer in the Navy who

[52] Foster, *John Company*, pp. 163, 167–9. From 1625 2d. in the pound was deducted from seamen's wages as a contribution to the Fund (*Ct. Min.*, 1677–9, 262), and towards 1785 this was raised to about 3d. under a scale of 1¼ per cent for all employees from commanders downwards.

[53] Court Books, vol. cvA, Minutes of 27 Sept. 1796, p. 667.

[54] cf. pp. 30–1 *ante*; *John Company*, pp. 167–9. The East India Company, however, should not be unduly blamed for following the social system and ideas of the Georgian period, and it was probably the most generous concern that ever held a trading charter (Lubbock, p. 53).

[55] Barlow, pp. 477, 488, 500–1.

also outbid him by doubling his offer of £100.[56] And in his last voyage (as already related) he had to serve under an immature captain, that had got the command through his marriage with a woman who had 'some considerable portion,' and his thereby finding friends to assist him.[57] It was obviously difficult, in those days, for a man who had started as an ordinary seaman, however experienced, to break through the better-class ring and obtain the coveted post of commander of an Indiaman.

After over forty years at sea, Barlow appropriately ends his Journal with thanks to God for preserving him 'in all his voyages through many and great dangers,' and especially from the imminent peril he had just escaped in a terrible storm towards the end of November 1703, in which the *Kingfisher* nearly foundered and 'more than one thousand good seamen lost their lives, making many poor widows and fatherless children.'[58] But besides these perils of the deep to all ranks in an Indiaman, there was in war-time the further risk of capture by the enemy, which might be considerable, as in 1695, when Barlow states that no less than five of the Company's ships were taken by the French and brought with their crews to France.[59]

The capture of eight Indiamen in the war of 1689 to 1698 is mentioned in Robert Knox's autobiography,[60] which (like Barlow's *Journal*) is a valuable record on some points relating to the Company's maritime service of this period. He was a contemporary of Barlow, being only about a year older. In December, 1655, he first went to sea with his father, Captain Robert Knox, who commanded the 'free' ship *Ann* on a voyage to Madras and Bengal. Returning in 1657, he re-accompanied his father on a similar voyage for the Company which started

[56] Barlow, pp. 505–7. This was before May 1710, when a bye-law prohibited the Company from hiring or freighting any ship in which a Director was concerned as an owner (I.O. List of Marine Records, p. xi).

[57] Barlow, pp. 530, 539.

[58] Barlow, pp. 552–3; Hervey III, 110–2.

[59] Barlow, pp. 255, 456: cf. p. 153 *post*.

[60] Knox's Ceylon, pp. 355, 368. The MS is in the Bodleian.



4 The *Pitt* versus the *St. Louis*, 29 September 1758 (*see* p. 155).
By courtesy of National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

in January 1658. It was after their arrival in Indian waters that they were both captured in Ceylon (p. 139). On his eventual return to England 1680, at the age of about 40, he and his companion, Stephen Rutland, were welcomed by the Court of Directors and awarded gifts of £20 and £10 respectively.[61]

After attending a mathematical school, he applied for employment in the Company's maritime service. He had mainly to thank Sir Josiah Child, who took pity on him, for getting the command of a small ship, the *Tonquin Merchant*, which sailed for China in September, 1681. In 1684 he was sent a second voyage in her as commander and supercargo. It turned out to be a bad one for him. Off Madagascar the vessel suffered in a hurricane; then he had trouble in trafficking with the local king, who in an angry fit nearly killed him and afterwards detained him, so that he had difficulty in getting aboard again. In the end he had to leave Madagascar without obtaining the supply of 'negroes' which the Company had wanted him to bring for slavery in its colony at St. Helena. He nearly died from scurvy on the voyage to that island; and the climax of disaster came with his men cutting the cables when he was ashore and running away with the ship. He was left with only the clothes on his back, but managed to get a passage home in one of the Company's ships from India. By a coincidence that savoured of impertinence he saw the *Tonquin* in Plymouth Sound on his arrival, but the mutineers took her to Cowes and escaped with their plunder.[62]

This leads up to one of the points dealt with by Barlow. Some of the *Tonquin's* men went to East India House, and in an attempt to clear themselves charged Knox 'with all the scandalous crimes they could invent, but the highest crime was short allowance.' This giving of 'scant allowance of provisions' to the seamen was, he says, 'the same according to custome as in all theire ships.' The men, he adds, were not

[61] Knox's Ceylon, pp. xl–lii, xxxvi. [62] Ibid., pp. 310–34.

starved, for they were fed with Sir Josiah's beef.[63] The Directors, however, were inclined to blame him as a sort of Jonah, who was the cause of all the ills that had befallen the ship. A motion was even made in the Committee to discharge him from the Company's service; but he was saved by Sir Josiah, who opposed it, saying the Company needed honest men to serve them. He also helped Knox to recover some of the money he had lost by directing him to take action against the sureties of the mutineers upon the breach of their bonds for good behaviour. Some of the directors tried to dissuade him from this step on the ground that the Company already had a very bad name with sailors, and his suits would so worsen it that 'they should have no seamen to serve them hereafter.' This supports Barlow's remarks as to the Company's unpopularity with the seamen of his time.[64]

Knox was obliged to sell his one-sixteenth share in the *Tonquin* to help in refitting her, and in 1686 sailed as her commander for the third time on a voyage to Bombay, with the King's commission to make war against the Great Mughal (Aurangzeb) and his subjects, and to seize any vessels belonging to them they might meet in the passage. He welcomed this opportunity of increasing his small stock at the expense of Indians who were likely to make only a small resistance; but his sole capture happened to be a ship from Sind with goods owned by, or consigned to, Persian merchants. She was taken in the Persian Gulf, and evidently the merchants must have protested, for the Company's agent at Bandar Abbas made him give up the ship and goods to them. Moreover on his return to England the Company levied a considerable sum for part of the goods which were said to have been plundered by his men. They demanded £383, but again, Sir Josiah came to his rescue and saved him from paying a large part of this sum. Otherwise he did not do badly, for he was able to trade on the Malabar coast to the benefit of the owners and himself;

[63] Knox's Ceylon, pp. 334, 338, 357. Sir Josiah was a victualler to the navy and merchantmen. [64] Ibid., pp. 338–9.

and he escaped having to pay 'mulct' to the Company by selling his private wares at Barbadoes.[65]

His fourth and last voyage in the *Tonquin* (1690–3) was a dangerous one, as he had to go to Madagascar again to ship 'negroes' from there to Bencoolen. The war with France, the European pirates in the Indian Ocean, and the unhealthiness of Bencoolen made it unattractive; but the prospect of trading on the Coromandel coast and at Calcutta (to which place he brought the ship in September 1692) turned the scale. For a change, the voyage (save for the loss from illness of thirteen of his crew at Barbadoes) was a successful one, and he brought home a rich cargo.[66] But now came an unforeseen breach with Sir Josiah Child. Knox angered him by objecting to take the command of a new ship, built according to Child's own invention, which made her so light that 'it would be hazardous in bad weather to be at sea in her.' He added fuel to the flames of Child's anger by also objecting to an extension of the Company's restriction on private trade, whereby they had, in 1694, cancelled the permission they had granted in 1681 for its carrying on in ports of India, and their former 'indulgence' to trade in toys and other small things. He was in fact as indignant as Barlow over the matter, and refused to take the command, unless he was allowed the same privileges as before. Even those were subject to fines; thus he was made to pay £45 on 600 pieces of silk he had bought at Tonquin in his first voyage. And he complains that on his last voyage, when he brought home a cargo which sold for £90,000, he was fined £5 10s. for five pieces of calico found missing in a bale, and a similar amount for seven pieces of fine cloth from Bengal, as against 41s. charged on them for customs.[67]

Child's displeasure was enhanced by his refusing offers of appointment as chief agent for the Company at Isfahan, Bencoolen, or St. Helena, as well as by his subscribing to

[65] Knox's Ceylon, pp. 340–1, 357–8.

[66] Ibid., pp. 341–54, 358.

[67] Knox's Ceylon, pp. 355–60. As to restrictions on private trade in 1694, see Bruce, III, 136.

the rival Scotch Company;[68] and in 1697, when he sought re-employment as a commander in the Company's service, he was angrily repulsed by Sir Josiah. And though other directors favoured his application, he refrained from pressing it for fear of Child's great influence. He calls them 'ungrateful masters,' and so set was he against the Company that, in May 1698, he sailed to India as commander of an interloping ship called the *Mary*. Her voyage, which lasted 29 months, did not turn out well for the subscribers;[69] and at the age of sixty he gave up the sea to live twenty years longer, apparently in London and in well-to-do circumstances.[70]

It seems likely that he and Barlow would meet there, and they had much in common to talk about. Besides their grievance over the Company's restrictions on private trade, both had failed to break through the coterie which, with influence and money to back them, got commands of its bigger ships over the heads of better seamen. Knox, after four voyages in the *Tonquin*, one of the small and worst ships, naturally wanted to be promoted to a big one; but he did not succeed, and in calling the Company 'ungrateful masters' he particularly refers to their preferring persons younger both in age and service and 'interloping captains and strangers' to men of greater experience and proved ability and fidelity.[71] He was, however (unlike Barlow) a man of 'good family,' and other circumstances that have been mentioned above contributed to his failure.

His account of conditions in the Company's service is a useful supplement to Barlow's and shows that a command of an Indiaman was then liable to cost as much as in the eighteenth century. He records Child as saying that 'it was worth one thousand pounds to gett a ship in theire service,' and he speaks of £500 as a usual sum to give for the command of a big ship.[72]

[68] Knox's Ceylon, pp. 361–3.
[69] Ibid., pp. 368–81.
[70] Ibid., pp. xviii–xxiii, 382, 392.
[71] Ibid., pp. 356, 360, 372.
[72] Ibid., pp. 360, 370. In Dec. 1678, the Company had ordered that any commander taking up for 'bottomry' more than the 'real worth of [his] part and interest in his ship' would be dismissed (*Ct. Min.* 1677–9, p. 235), but such notices had little or no effect.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Company's Flag

As already mentioned (p. 22), the Company's flag consisted of alternate red and white stripes running lengthwise, with a canton in the upper corner next the staff, which in the seventeenth century bore St. George's cross in a white field. That is the way in which it is depicted in colours by Barlow, when a seaman in the Company's ship *Experiment* in 1670.[1] The number of stripes then varied, generally from nine to thirteen, the top and other odd ones being red; and this frame of parallel bars gave rise to its nick-name of 'John Company's gridiron.' In the eighteenth century thirteen had become the usual number of stripes (p. 104).

Nothing has been found in extant records to show or suggest how or why it came to be in this form. Sir William Foster has surmised that it may have been derived from the Portuguese flag of that period which bore alternate green and white stripes, with the royal arms superimposed in the centre. After their conquest of parts of India they introduced a system of granting passes to native vessels trading under their approval, and this was copied by the English and Dutch. The Portuguese were likely to allow such vessels to wear their striped flag *minus* the arms, which would, he says, be inappropriate on a commercial emblem; and the English might have adopted the same practice, merely substituting red for green. He supposes that the flag for local junks was merely the 'gridiron' of stripes, and

[1] See the coloured reproduction of three of his pictures in *E.F.*, vol. I.

that the Company went one step further and distinguished the flag for their own ships by putting the national emblem of St. George's cross in the canton.

The Company had certainly allowed its flag to be flown (whether with or without the canton) on native trading vessels, as is for instance shown by Dr. Fryer's account, in 1673 when he was a passenger in the Company's ship *Unity*, of her meeting off the Coromandel coast 'three country junks' that had English passes and were 'wearing an East India strip'd ancient.'[2] But the main object of the passes was to guarantee the vessels covered by them from interference by English ships, just as those vessels also took Portuguese and Dutch passes to prevent similar trouble from ships of those nations; and a country ship sailing from a native port where the Company had a factory, such as Surat or Masulipatam, though she might have an English pass, would not ordinarily fly the English flag. It was only in special cases that she would be allowed to do so, e.g., if she carried persons or goods for the Company or its servants, or there was imminent danger of attack at sea.[3] And as the purpose of their being permitted to wear the flag was to ensure their protection also from ships of other nations, it seems likely that it would correspond to the English colours known to seamen in Eastern waters, such as the national one of St. George's cross in red on a white field or the Company's striped flag with the canton comprising that same cross, as worn by its ships. The fact of Fryer calling the flag on the junks an 'ancient' (ensign) supports this; and Barlow's picture of the Surat roadstead distinctly shows the cross in the one worn by the boat in the mouth of the river.[4] Letters from Captain Keigwin of 19 and 21 November, 1679, when he was serving as commodore of a small fleet blockading the island of Khanderi, or Kenery,

[2] Fryer, 1, 73–4.

[3] cf. *E.F.* 1665-7, p. 125; 1667–9, pp. 201, 212, 1, 202, 203. Boats from Bombay, as it was an English possession, could also fly English colours (*E.F.* 1, 124).

[4] *E.F.* 1, plate opp. p. 194, So also does one of the boats shown in the frontispiece. It may of course have been an English ship's boat.

near Bombay after its seizure by Shivaji, also corroborate it; he there writes of a *shibar* (country vessel) 'having English colours' and 'showing by her ensign she belonged to the English or [was] under their protection.'[5] Similar references to the English flag or colours as worn on some local vessels are of frequent occurrence in the records of the Company.[6] And if that flag showed the canton with the red cross in the seventeenth century, the canton would continue when the Union Jack took its place. These considerations detract from the suggestion that the Company's flag in such cases was without the canton, but they do not affect the possible derivation of the stripes from the Portuguese flag.

Barlow's picture of Calicut[7] shows that Indiamen in 1670 also used the red ensign with a canton having a red St. George's cross on a white field, then commonly worn by merchantmen. A proclamation issued by King Charles II on 18 September 1674 in fact prescribed for 'merchant's ships' the use only of two flags, viz., the red ensign just mentioned and 'the Flag and Jack white with a red cross (commonly called Saint George's Cross) passing right through the same.' It made no exception in favour of the Company's flag; and in November 1676, Samuel Pepys, the secretary of the Admiralty, drew attention to this contravention. Thereupon the Company's directors arranged a compromise with the Admiralty by which its flag would be worn only in Eastern waters and below St. Helena in the Atlantic. Orders accordingly were contained in the sailing instructions to commanders up to September 1688. Though they then disappeared, there is no reason to suppose that the orders did not continue in force.[8]

[5] F.R. 19 Bom. 77, 78, cf. O. and R. Strachey, *Keigwin's Rebellion* pp. 36–8; Orme, (1) pp. 98, 101.

[6] Thus a letter from the Surat factory to the Company, dated 26 Jan. 1683 (O.C. 4905) speaks of vessels let on freight by its servants 'wareing our collours' and thereby gaining 'creditt,' and of merchants preferring them to 'a ship under the King's [Aurangzeb's] collour.'

[7] *E. F.*, frontispiece to vol. I.

[8] W. G. Perrin, *British Flags* (1922), pp. 130, 131; N.R.S. *Catalogue of Pepysian MSS*, III, 334, IV, 391; the editor's article on the Company's striped flag in the *Mariner's Mirror* of Oct. 1937 (hereafter cited as 'M.M.'), pp. 451–3.

In 1707, as a consequence of the Treaty of Union between England and Scotland, Queen Anne had the canton in the red ensign altered to one combining the red cross of St. George with the white cross of St. Andrew on a blue ground. Some controversy has arisen whether the canton of the Company's flag was similarly altered, but undoubtedly this was done. A proclamation of Queen Anne prohibited all merchantmen from wearing any other flag than the red ensign as altered; and in view of the precedent of 1676 this would apply to the Company's ships between England and St. Helena. It is very unlikely that the Company would disobey it and thus offend the Admiralty, for England was then at war with France, and records show that the Company was constantly asking the Lord High Admiral to provide convoys for its ships, to give protection against the impressment of its sailors for service in the Royal Navy, and for other favours. And if the canton was altered in the red ensign, it is inconceivable that it would not also be changed in its own flag. The omission to do so would have been both impolite and illogical. The flag is in fact shown with the union canton of St. George's and St. Andrew's crosses in six pictures which were painted for the East India Company, in 1732, by the artists Lambert and Scott. All of them show Indiamen as wearing the red ensign with that canton; and one of them (a picture of Bombay) has the Company's striped flag with the same canton displayed as a prominent feature of one of its ships in the foreground. There is further evidence to the same effect in other paintings and coloured engravings of the eighteenth century, which need not be detailed here.[9]

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, the number of stripes in the Company's flag varied, but thirteen are shown for it in a flag-plate of 1701,[10] and the same number appear in the Bombay picture. This may, therefore, be taken as the

[9] M.M. pp. 450–60: see also the reproductions of three of the pictures in that article.

[10] Plate 11 in the Appendix to John Beaumont's *The Present State of the Universe.*

usual number. It was also customary for the red stripes to be the odd ones, including the top and bottom rows. And, as shown above, from 1707 to 1801, the flag had a canton similar to that prescribed for the red ensign. The flag in this form was identical in all respects with that hoisted by Washington, in January 1776 at Cambridge, Massachusetts, and generally known as the 'Grand Union Flag.' It is also called the Cambridge Flag or the Continental Flag; and it symbolised the union of the thirteen American states in revolt against King George III and his Ministry.

It would be out of place to discuss in these pages the controversial question whether the Company's flag had anything to do with the origin of the American 'Stars and Stripes'; but one point in that discussion may be briefly dealt with, as it concerns the voyages made by Indiamen. At least one American writer has stated that they were frequent visitors to Boston Harbour, and that its flag was a familiar sight to the colonists at the time of Revolution.[11] This, however, is untrue for the simple reason that the Company was not then engaged in trade with America, and in fact was, at any rate from 1698, prohibited by law from doing so. Acts of Parliament from that time required it to bring all its goods from the East, without breaking bulk, to some port in England or Wales, where they were to be unladen; and subsequently the goods were to be sold in London by public auction. And a special enactment by Parliament (13 Geo. 3, cap. 44. sec.3) was required to allow the Company for exceptional reasons to export tea on its own account to Boston and other American ports in 1773.[12] It has been stated that the Company did so in Indiamen,[13] but papers in the Public Record Office and the late India Office conclusively disprove this: it is clear that the tea was not sent in Indiamen, or other ships specially chartered by the Company for the purpose, but was merely consigned as freight goods in ships trading between London and the

[11] M.M., pp. 464–5. [12] M.M., pp. 466, 468–70.
[13] e.g. *The Cambridge Modern History*, VI, 446.

American colonies. Such ships would not fly the Company's flag, but the red ensign. It was not till 1824 that an Act (5 Geo. 4 cap. 58) was passed empowering the Company, or any person licensed by it, to trade directly from China to the British colonies and plantations in America.[14]

In any case the Company's flag was not allowed to be worn in the Atlantic above the latitude of St. Helena (15°S.), nor did they ever go round Cape Horn. The nearest to North America that any of its ships sometimes got before 1824 seems to have been the Barbadoes, in the Windward Islands, as Barlow did in 1694 and Knox did in 1688 and 1693[15] This was not a regular place of call; and though bad weather or war-time might be the excuse, a strong reason was probably the desire of the ship's company to trade there, so as to avoid the Company's mulcts or fines on private trade (pp. 89, 99 *ante*.).

On 1 January 1801, the canton of the red ensign was again altered, in order to incorporate the red saltire on a white ground that represented Ireland; and the Company's flag undoubtedly followed suit, though there is no extant minute or correspondence about it. In 1824 came the end of its appearance as an ensign in its ships. The Admiralty refused to issue a warrant, as requested by the Company, authorising its use as their 'distinguishing colours' in the form of an ensign in its ships, but they allowed it to be used as a Jack or signalling flag. The Company issued orders accordingly and on 2 March 1824, resolved that 'its Colours' be not sent on board the Company's ships in future.' The red ensign took its place for all ordinary occasions. The striped flag, however, appears to have been worn by some of its vessels in Indian waters, even after the Company's trading charter had been abolished in 1833, e.g., by surveying ships of the Bengal Marine until 1861. It would probably also continue to be worn by country vessels trading under British protection (p. 102), at any rate up to 2 February 1829, when the

[14] M.M., pp. 466, 467.

[15] Barlow, pp. 446–7; Knox's Ceylon, pp. 341, 353.

Bombay government ordered the discontinuance of flags flown by them and other merchant vessels in contravention of the proclamation of 1 January 1801.[16] The Bombay Marine's ensign from 1707 to 1827 was the same as the Company's flag, except that it had a red cross, two stripes wide, extending through the flag along the S. and E. sides of the canton, and showing the vessel by which it was worn to be an armed one.[17]

Under an Admiralty warrant of 1827 that Marine force from 1828 until May 1830, when it became incorporated in the Indian Navy, adopted the red ensign as its banner. But, besides that ensign, the Indian Navy appears to have continued to use the Company's Jack, i.e., plain red and white stripes without a canton; and, on the latter being ceremonially hauled down on 30 April, 1863, when the Indian Navy came to a temporary end owing to its main duties of sea-defence being taken over by the Royal Navy, the history of the Flag may be said to have come to an end.[18]

[16] Low, I, 499n. This use of British colours was disliked by some naval officers, and in 1722 Captain Thomas Mathews, commodore of a squadron of four men-of-war sent to India to deal with pirates, forbad it at Bombay (Biddulph, pp. 172, 197, 198); but it would almost certainly have been resumed after his departure in December, 1723.

[17] Commander Rowand's compilation, pp. 20, 39. A similar red bar across the flag was also used by the Company's ships when armed as privateers. (ibid., p. 16).

[18] Low II, 372; M.M., pp. 461–2. The Indian Navy was resuscitated in 1928. The coloured frontispiece shows the Company's flag (top left) up to 1707, and (bottom right) from 1707 to 1801, as well as various ensigns of the Bombay Marine, etc., as specified below them. They come from a Christmas card used by members of the Indian Navy in 1936; and the editor believes it had the high authority of the late Commander Rowand.

CHAPTER FIVE

Voyages out and Home

THE voyage, whether out or home, was apt to be both tedious and dangerous.

A strangely circuitous course was taken, for the Indiamen were at the mercy of wind and current. Clive's first voyage 'from England for Madrass' was made on the *Winchester* of 500 tons (Captain Gabriel Steward). She sailed from the Thames on 10 March 1743, and ten days later 'lay too for the fleet and some merchant ships to come out of Plymouth.' On 18 April her consort, the *Princess Louisa* (Captain Pinson), went aground on one of the Cape Verde Islands, and seventy lives were lost. Three days were spent at St. Jago [Sao Thiago], another one of the islands, and for the next twenty-four days the ship headed in the direction of Brazil, in order to use the north-east trade wind. On 17 May, in the early morning, the *Winchester* herself went aground and remained so fast 'that she would neither rear nor stay.' It was discovered that they were on the coast of Brazil. The 'Treasure belonging to the Hon'ble Company' was landed; and there they remained until 22 September, when 'the Pylott came on board to carry us into the Harbour' of Pernambuco. Repairs were put in hand but they took so long that it was not until 11 February 1744 that the *Winchester* weighed anchor and 'stood to the North-ward.' The object now was to pick up the south-east trade wind to carry them round the Cape. But a storm drove them into Table Bay; and here they stayed until 7 April. A north-easterly course was taken and Madras roads

were finally reached on 1 June 1744. It had taken Clive over a year to make the voyage, and in his enforced stay at Pernambuco he learned Portuguese. *The Winchester* went on to Bengal and there Captain Steward died three days after his arrival.[1] 'He was always a very noted Man for a strong constitution,' wrote Clive to his father on 10 September 1744, 'but had the Misfortune to get a Fever from which in these hot countries men are sure either to recover or die in three or four days.' This was the first opportunity of sending a letter, as he landed at the time when the south-west monsoon was approaching, and all the homeward-bound Indiamen had sailed.

The India ships, after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, made for the island of Johanna, one of the Comoro group in the Mozambique channel, off the north of Madagascar. The China fleet would part company with them off the Cape. The *Walpole* (Captain Thomas Butler) left Plymouth on 22 June 1794, and Cape Town on 20 September. She parted company with the ships bound to India on 7 October, when nearly off the island of St. Paul.[2] The captain then 'determined to make our passage between New Holland (Australia) and New Zealand,' as he was 'sure we could not so soon have got here (to Macao) by any other way at this season.' Macao was reached on 1 January, 1795.

This was one of two routes to China which will strike modern navigators as unusual. The other was by way of the Moluccas. Orders were sent by the Court of Directors to the homeward China fleet of 1798[3] to proceed, on leaving the mouth of the Canton river, between the southern end of the island of Formosa and the northern extremity of the

[1] Log of the *Winchester*, 1742–6, I.O. Marine Records, No. 643 c.

[2] The island of St. Paul lies in lat. 39° 30′ S. long. 75° E., more than half-way between the Cape and Australia, so it was very much astray for ships bound to India. The latter usually separated from the China ships before long. 50° E., cf. Parkinson's Plate III, reproducing a chart of 1803.

[3] The commodore was Joseph Farington's friend Lestock Wilson, who was commanding the *Exeter* of 1,200 tons. He married a Miss Boileau at Madras in 1780, when chief officer of the *York*.

Philippine group; and thereafter in an easterly direction past the Caroline (Pelew) islands by 'the route commonly called Pitts Passage and Dampier Strait, and then to the east of the island of Ceram.'[4]

This passage had been discovered in 1759 by Captain William Wilson of the *Pitt*, which 'arrived in the Thames on 26 April (1760), six months earlier than she had been expected; Wilson having taken his route through the Molucca islands to the north of New Guinea.' So great was the importance attached to this achievement that a gold medal was presented to the commander by the directors. On 26 June 1760 it was 'on a motion ordered that the thanks of the Court be given to Captain Wilson for his valuable services in gaining his passage from Fort St. George to China in the ship *Pitt* at an uncommon season and by a new track, greatly to the advantage of the Company; and it was referred to the Committee of Treasury to provide a medal of one hundred guineas value with a suitable inscription thereon, to be presented to him in token of the Court's sense of his merit.'[5] The 'new track' was taken in 1764 by the *Princess Augusta* (Captain Thomas Baddison), which was also making the voyage from Fort St. George to China. Her course is shown in one of Alexander Dalrymple's charts (vol. II, No. 315), and it would appear that the passage lay between the north-east extremity of New Guinea and Waigeu, a large island of the Molucca archipelago. It is now known as Dampier Strait; and the name of Pitt [Passage is still used for the channel from the Ceram Sea to the Molucca Sea between the islands of Sula and Buru.][6] The medal is illustrated in the Marquess of Milford

[4] Sir Evan Cotton here gives an unpaged reference to vol. III of Morse's *East India Company in China*, but this relates to the nineteenth century. The only reference to Pitt's Passage seems to be in vol. II, p. 319, where he mentions the dispatch of the *Thames* in May 1800 under instructions to proceed 'by the route commonly called Pitt's Passage, and (pass) into the Indian Ocean through some of the straits to the eastward of Java.'

[5] I am indebted to Sir William Foster for the extract from the Court's Minutes. Wilson was on the same occasion appointed by ballot to be assistant to the Master Attendant at a yearly salary of £100. A bronze impression of the medal was shown to me in May 1927 by Messrs. Spink and Son. (*Continued on p.* 111)

Haven's *Naval Medals* (No. 369). On the obverse is a figure of Neptune seated on a rock and pointing out to Mercury, who is standing, a new route to China through a cluster of islands: the legend is 'Iterare cursus relictos, MDCCLX.' On the reverse is the following inscription 'The gift [of the English East India Company] to Captain William Wilson [Commander of the ship Pitt] as an acknowledgement of his genius [in having made his passage to and] from China by an unusual course [and thereby evincing that Navigation to be practicable at any season] of the year.'

James Forbes has given a graphic account in his *Oriental Memoirs*[7] of his first voyage to Bombay in 1765. Having been appointed to a writership at that settlement, he embarked with fourteen others in the month of March. Although he had not yet reached his sixteenth year, he tells us 'at that early age I commenced my descriptive letters and the drawings which accompany them.' After 'encountering the boisterous seas in the Bay of Biscay' and passing the islands of the Madeira group, a halt was made 'for water and refreshments' in the middle of May at Porto Praya, the principal port of St. Jago. A week later the ship sailed for the Cape of Good Hope, but 'on discovering a dangerous leak we were obliged to alter our course and proceed immediately to Rio de Janeiro . . . where we continued from the end of June until the middle of October.' Leaving Rio on 12 October, Tristan da Cuna was sighted about the end of the month, and on 15 November a distant view was had of Table Mountain. 'In those seas we encountered violent tempests; and for weeks together passed through such foaming mountains as baffle all description:

(*Continued from p.* 110)

[6] The words in brackets have been substituted for Sir Evan's 'Strait has been applied to the channel between Choiseul and Santa Isabel, two of the islands of the Solomon group.' The 'Pitt Passage' is shown in a modern Atlas as described in the brackets, and an Indiaman would not ordinarily pass through the Solomon Islands unless she was bound for the Coral Sea, so as to round N. or S. Australia, or was going to China by that route (cf. Parkinson, pp. 101, 118). Formerly however, Pitt's Passage was not a definite route, but was a name applied to a variety of channels between New Guinea on the E. and Celebes on the W. (Morse, II, 319 n.).

*[7] Vol. I [of either edition], chap. i..

indeed it is difficult for a person unaccustomed to such scenes to form any idea of this immense body of water when agitated by a storm.' The ship was 'not permitted' to touch at the Cape and bore away for India. An alarm of fire was raised soon after the coast of Africa was left, but 'the captain and officers acted with a calm intrepidity, and in an hour the flames were extinguished.' On the second approach to the equator, calms and contrary currents drove them out of their reckoning: fresh provisions and water became scarce, and the seaman, as well as the recruits on board, were attacked by scurvy. This disease, says Forbes, baffles all the art of medicine; but if the patient is taken on shore to breathe a pure air and enjoy the refreshment of fruit and vegetables, he generally recovers. Many deaths took place during the six weeks of continuous calm under the line; but when they were reduced to their last cask of water, a gentle breeze sprang up and enabled them to make the coast of Malabar. From the Dutch settlement of Cochin, where they remained for two days, the ship proceeded to Tellicherry, an English settlement, and thence to Mangalore, Goa and Bombay. The voyage had lasted exactly eleven months.

On 1 December 1775, Forbes sailed for the Cape in the *Betsy* schooner, 'a vessel built on an Indiaman's longboat and perhaps the smallest ever sent on such a voyage.' The crew consisted of the captain, two officers, four European sailors, and a number of Lascars. The anchor was dropped in Simon's Bay, which Forbes calls Simmon's Harbour, on 20 January 1776; and here he remained until the arrival of the *Calcutta* Indiaman (Captain William Thomson) which had sailed from Bombay ten weeks before him. After a pleasant passage of fourteen days, St. Helena was reached. The ship sailed on 28 February and, favoured by the south-east trade wind, crossed the line on March 12. Variable breezes, squalls, calms, thunder and lightning, and heavy rain were next encountered and continued until 23 March when the noise of surf was heard at midnight, and it was

discovered at day-break that they were within a mile of the Guinea or Gold Coast' A strong southern current set in and at the end of a fortnight they were farther from England than when they made the landfall. After several weeks of 'listless apathy' they sighted a French ship from the Mauritius, 'which had already been a month in these latitudes.' It was not until 17 April that the wind veered from the west and settled in the regular north-east trade. The Cape Verde Islands were passed, but a calm detained them close to the barren mountainous island of Fogo, and the Azores did not come into view until 13 May. Several vessels were spoken in the Atlantic, and tea, arrack and Indian delicacies were exchanged for English porter, butter and cheese. Fresh gales, boisterous seas and cold weather followed: and as late as 30 May, the decks were covered with snow. 'At that time our water and provisions running low and the sails being in a shattered condition,' the ship made for the Cove of Cork (Queenstown), where she arrived on 31 May, 'after a voyage by the log of twelve thousand, nine hundred miles from Bombay.' As the *Calcutta* was likely to be detained here for some weeks (and in fact did not anchor in the Downs until 13 July), Forbes proceeded on 6 June with several others in the *Pitt* yacht and landed at Hastings on 10 June.[8]

Grose, a writer in the Company's service, who made a voyage to Bombay in 1750, was more fortunate than Forbes. He embarked on board the *Lord Anson* (Captain Charles Foulis) bound for Bombay and China, and sailed out of the Downs on 30 March. Fine weather must have been experienced, for he fills several pages with an account of the various 'fishes which form no small part of the entertainment in the course of the passage,' all the ships, he says, 'being equipped with a competent number of harpoons or fish-gigs.'

On 28 July, the ship 'anchored happily in the road of Johanna,' and a stay of a week was made. It is common

[8] *Memoirs*, chap. xx.

practice, writes Grose, on a ship's arrival to pitch a tent ashore, made of the sails and spare-booms for the reception of the sick, 'who though never so much disabled with the scurvy, generally recover their health surprisingly quick, as much doubtless by the specifically reviving influence of the earth as ever by the variety of excellent refreshments and the fresh water.'[9] The reference to 'the reviving influence of the earth' is explained by a curious passage in the travels of John Macdonald, who accompanied Colonel Alexander Dow, the historian of Hindustan, to Bombay as his servant in 1769. Writing of Johanna, he says that the cure for scurvy was to put the sufferer into the earth and to leave them there for a whole day.[10] The last stage of Grose's journey was begun on 4 August and a straight run to Bombay was made, for it was completed on 28 August. 'We came to an anchor in the road, saluting the fort, as customary, with nine guns, which was returned with the difference of two less in number.'

When William Hickey went out in the *Seahorse* in 1777, he sailed from Portsmouth on 1 May. The wind down the Bay of Biscay was favourable, 'driving us on at an immense rate.' On 15 July, the ship anchored in False Bay, and remained at the Cape until 5 August. About 8 October the mouth of the Bay of Bengal was reached. 'It being too late in the season for us to venture upon the coast of Coromandel, where we should otherwise have stopped for a few hours, we stood down on the eastern side of the Bay.' After an 'admirable good run for seven days' they made land which was identified by Colonel Watson of Kidderpore Dockyard fame, who was one of the passengers, as one of the islands on the coast of Aracan. He goes on[11]—

> 'Lunar observations were not then come into general use and none were ever taken on board the *Seahorse*. Colonel Watson, amongst his many accomplishments, was a perfect algebraist, thereby correcting his watch to such a nicety as to render it to all intent and purposes a complete time-piece. By his account thus kept he

[9] *Voyage*, pp. 1–15. [10] *Travels* (reprint), p. 102. [11] Hickey, II. 113.

made the ship more to the northward and eastward than the reckonings of any of the officers, and during the voyage he had always been found right, especially with respect to the Cape of Good Hope, which we made within half an hour of the time he said we should, although by the ship's reckoning we were near three hundred miles from it.'

The observations of Watson were not, however, accepted by Captain Arthur or by George Simson the chief officer. The commander, on being told that, if he stood on the same course and at the same rate, he would run the ship ashore 'very near the place where the *Falmouth* was wrecked' on 13 June, 1766, 'when every soul on board perished,' said not a word, but 'bursting with rage, looked as red as a turkey cock, puffing and blowing with more than usual violence.' But the forecast proved correct. The ship ran among the rocks at three in the morning; and Captain Arthur, who had refused to take soundings and had retired to the roundhouse at midnight, rushed out of his cabin 'almost frantic, crying like a child that he was ruined beyond redemption and had sacrificed his own life as well as that of all on board.' Fortunately, Henry Warre, the second mate who was in charge of the watch, had, upon the first alarm, put the helm up, braced the yards, and hauled his wind; and the ship ran into twenty-five fathoms of water. The danger had been great. 'At daylight the mainland of Aracan was distinctly seen from the deck with breakers extending a great way out, over which the sea broke with immense fury'.[12] Having thus cleared the coast, the ship stood to the westward in order to make Cape Palmyras, and remained landlocked and at anchor for nine days. It was not until 30 October, or twenty-five days after entering the Bay of Bengal, that a light breeze

*[12] Hickey, II. 114–6. Captain Arthur was subsequently in command of the *Major* which sailed from Portsmouth on 6 February 1782 for the Coast and China and was blown up at Culpee [the usual stopping place of Indiamen at the mouth of the River Hugli] by an explosion on board on 23 April 1784. The *Calcutta Gazette* of 22 December 1785 announces his death on board the *Southampton* 'on his passage to Europe within a fortnight's sail of England.' The *Southampton* (Captain John Lennox) arrived in the Downs on 10 June 1785.

from the south-west sprang up and carried her into the famous Balasore Roads, the scene of Henry Meredyth Parker's poem:

> We have let the anchor go,
> It has sunk twelve fathoms deep,
> Where the green sea-weeds do grow
> And the crimson sea-shells sweep.
> And while swinging to the tide
> We can hear the breakers roar
> With a sad and sullen sound
> In the Roads of Balasore.

Two days later, on 1 November, the *Seahorse* came-to off the island of Saugor; and Hickey and his friends made their way up to the river in a paunceway to Calcutta. They had spent just over six months on the voyage.[13]

Hickey's next voyage was much more prolonged. He left Calcutta on 15 April 1799 in a sloop, and on the 22nd boarded the *Nassau* at Barrabulla, below the river Hugli. She was 'laying in a wild and open sea, surrounded by sands over which the surf was breaking tremendously in every direction,' and was eight miles from the nearest land. It blew so hard on the 24th, 25th and 26th that the pilot did not dare to move the ship; but on the two following days some progress was made. On 1 May, the pilot went off, 'it then blowing a hard gale from the southward,' and the *Nassau* 'stood to the east-south-east under courses in company with the *Southampton* (Captain John Lennox), the errantest hog trough that ever floated on salt water.' The Andaman islands were made during 'exceeding tempestuous weather'; and on 1 June Captain Gore informed his passenger that he despaired of reaching Madras and must proceed to Malacca to replenish and refit. However, the wind moderated and an observation was taken on 4

[13] Hickey, II, 117–8. A 'paunceway' (from Bengali *pansoi*) was a light kind of boat used on the Bengal rivers (*Hobson-Jobson*, p. 688). Hickey describes it as 'so constructed that you have not room to sit upright under' its covering of mat, 'nor is there any place to let your legs hang down, passengers sitting upon a platform like tailors on their shopboard.'

June for the first time. A clear view was had of the Nicobars, but the gale increased as night set in, and at midnight it was discovered that the ship was close to land. 'Captain Gore, panic-struck, knew not what he was about, giving orders and counter orders in the same breath.' Fortunately the second officer, John Pascall Larkins, kept his head, and the ship was hauled close to the wind. In two hours the land was cleared and the course set for Madras, off which place the anchor was dropped on 11 June, 'having been six weeks on the passage, then considered a fair period against the monsoon and when scarcely any of our ships were copper-bottomed.'[14] The *Southampton* did not arrive until 10 August; and Captain Lennox, upon being questioned why he had taken sixteen weeks to make Madras, replied in broad Scots that they must ask that 'devil's child,' his nephew and chief mate Charles Lennox, who with his 'cursed lunar observations and his damned round-about vagaries' had kept them at sea. The repairs to the *Nassau* having been completed, each captain was ordered to take on board eleven officers and seventy soldiers of the Pondicherry garrison[15] for conveyance to England. The two ships set sail on 30 October, and entered Trincomalee harbour on 2 November. Here they remained until 30 November, and had barely resumed their voyage when scurvy broke out on the *Nassau*. To add to their troubles a tremendous wind sprang up from the west-north-west on 15 January, when off the south end of Madagascar. In three days, six of the crew died of scurvy, and within the next twelve days the deaths amounted to thirty-three. 'Captain Gore, terrified beyond measure at the forlorn state we were in, carried his weakness so far that at last he would not receive the sick list from the doctor, also forbidding the tolling of the bell previous to performing the funeral service.' Wine, sugar, spruce and every other anti-scorbutic procurable were abundantly supplied without material

[14] Hickey, II. 186–93.

[15] The English had captured Pondicherry for the second time in 1768.

benefit. There was nothing for it but to make for the Cape as speedily as possible. On 2 February, 1780, the *Nassau* and her consort anchored in False Bay. The ship was then being worked entirely by the French prisoners, while Larkins and the fifth mate were the only officers fit for duty, the fresh provisions were entirely exhausted, and not more than three weeks' supply of water was left.[16] Hickey had now spent ten months on the voyage to Bengal, and finding that the *Nassau* showed no sign of sailing, took a passage on a Dutch East Indiaman, the *Held Woltemade*. The commander, Mynheer Paardekoper, gave him his state-room, but made him pay £600. The Dutch fleet sailed on 9 March, and reached the coast of Ireland on 30 May, 'running along the western side in order to go round the northern end of it and of Scotland.' The Shetlands were sighted on 5 June, and here the fleet was met by a Dutch frigate that convoyed them to the Texel by 10 June. It was not, however, until 30 June, 1780, that Hickey arrived in London; but even then he was ahead of the *Nassau* and the *Southampton*, which anchored in the Downs on 14 September — sixteen and a half months after leaving the Sandheads.[17]

No less alarming was the series of misfortunes which befell the *Talbot* in 1769. Sailing for home from the Hugli on 17 March under the command of Sir Charles Hudson, she encountered violent storms off the Mauritius and the Cape, and suffered so severely that she was in imminent peril of foundering, and was obliged to put back to St. Augustine's Bay, in Madagascar, to refit. Upon completion of repairs she resumed her voyage and again met with a tremendous gale off the Cape, in which she lost her top masts and mainyard and shipped such heavy seas that the whole of the livestock was washed overboard. When she eventually reached St. Helena on 18 October, she had been seven months on her passage from Bengal. The passengers landed half-starved, and so shattered were the nerves of

[16] Hickey, II. 202–6, 212–9. [17] Hickey, II. 222, 228–46.

Mr. Francis Charlton, a senior merchant in the Company's service, that he flatly declined to go on board again, and Hickey found him waiting for another ship when he called at St. Helena, on his way home in the *Plassey* in February 1770.[18] Several passengers followed his example; but Philip Dacres, the name-father of Dacres Lane in Calcutta, and his wife Rebecca elected to continue the voyage, and the *Talbot* ultimately arrived in the Downs on 15 January 1770 — ten months after she had dropped her pilot at the Sandheads.[19]

When wind and weather favoured the seafarer, it was possible to make the voyage out and home within a more reasonable period. The *Marquess Wellesley* (Captain Bruce Mitchell) left Gravesend at the end of February 1802, and Spithead on 5 March, called at Madeira on 14 March, rounded the Cape on 24 April, sighted Ceylon on 21 June, and anchored off Fort Saint George on 24 June. In February 1803, she left Madras and arrived in the Downs on 1 August. The outward voyage had taken four months and the homeward voyage six. But the passage was not ordinarily accomplished with such speed. Hickey's friend and patron, Sir Henry Russell, sailed for Calcutta in the *Earl Fitzwilliam* (Captain James Tweedale) in September 1797, and did not reach his destination until May 1798.[20] In the *Calcutta Gazette* of 24 March 1789, the arrival is announced of a Dutch Indiaman which had taken fourteen months to come from Amsterdam to Bengal. Lord Valentia started in June 1801 and did not set foot in India until the following January. Twenty-two years later, Bishop Heber, who left England on 16 June 1823, was thought to have made a remarkably quick passage in reaching the Sandheads on 16 October; the *Castle Eden*, with Hickey on board, weighed

*18 Hickey, I. 236–7.

*19 Francies Charlton arrived in Bengal as a writer on 4 August 1754, and escaped to Fulta after the capture of Calcutta. He had been 'fitted and sent to India entirely at my father's cost,' says Hickey (I. 167). Philip Dacres arrived just after the 'troubles' of 1756. He was Collector of Calcutta in 1776 and retired in 1784.

*20 Hickey, IV. 194 [The *Earl Fitzwilliam* was burnt 'in the Bengal river' on 23 Feb. 1799].

anchor at Saugor on 19 February 1808, and arrived in the Downs on 15 August.[21] The *Queen* (Captain Sir Peter Douglas) took nearly two months to come from Bombay to Calcutta in 1786. She sailed on 16 October with General John Carnac on board, and arrived off the Sandheads on 6 December. Her outward voyage from home began on 20 February, when she left the Downs, and she did not reach Bombay until 23 July — five months later. The *Lansdown* (Captain William Storey) sailed from the Downs on 26 April 1786, and anchored in the Hugli on 21 September — a feat of sufficient importance to merit special mention in the *Calcutta Gazette*.

A straight run from Gravesend to Calcutta could, however, be accomplished in three months. In October 1805 the *Medusa* frigate, which brought out Lord Cornwallis, 'made a still more extraordinary passage home than she had done out, being only twelve weeks from the Bengal pilot's leaving her to her arrival at Portsmouth.'[22] This was 'a run,' comments Hickey, 'never before equalled: she not having been quite nine months in performing the (double) voyage! The nearest to it was a run of the Company's packet *Lapwing*, many years before, this ship making a voyage to Madeira, Madras and Bengal and back to India in ten months and two days.' The *Lapwing* of 120 tons had, in effect, sailed from Portsmouth under the command of Captain John Griffin on 5 April 1762, and was back again in the Downs on 12 February 1763. Warren Hastings, in his *Review of the State of Bengal* (p. 12) records that the *Surprise* packet of 390 tons, commanded by Captain David Asquith, left England on 29 April 1784, and arrived in Calcutta on 28 August. 'She had shortened her passage, and would ordinarily not have arrived until the latter end of October or the beginning of November.'[23] When he

[21] Hickey, IV. 410, 462.

[22] Hickey, IV. 234–5.

[23] The *Surprise* packet, Hickey tells us (II. 152), was the first ship to be launched from Colonel Watson's yard at Kidderpore. Before leaving the stocks she was 'taken up by the Government and sent to Europe as a packet, making a very excellent passage and proving a first rate sailer.'

first came out to Bengal in 1750, he was eight and a half months at sea. The *London* left Gravesend on 27 January, and after calling at Fort Saint David on 27 August, reached Madras on 8 September, and finally dropped her anchor at Culpee on 9 October. His last voyage home in the *Berrington* (Captain John Johnston) began on 1 February 1785, and ended on 18 June. Mrs. Hastings embarked exactly a year before (February 1784) in the *Atlas* (Captain Allen Cooper) and arrived in the Downs on 28 July. Sir Elijah Impey left Calcutta in January 1784 in the *Worcester* (Captain John Cook) and completed his voyage on 9 June. The *Belmont* (Captain William Dick Gamage) with the body of Sir Eyre Coote on board, left Fort Saint George on 6 February 1784, and arrived at Plymouth, on 25 August.

Communications were not only slow but uncertain. As late as 14 March 1815, Mr. Peter Cherry dispatches four letters by as many ships. He writes 'My letter to you of the 28 December was unfortunately on board the *Bengal*, burnt at Ceylon. I have now sent a letter to all of you by different ships and hope at least one will arrive safe. My letters by the Fleet are divided between the *Lady Castlereagh*, the *Phoenix*, the *Warren Hastings*, and the *Coldstream*.' Again, he notes on 28 May 1816 that letters sent from Madras on 6 September (1815) were answered at home on 18 January and received on 26 May, 'only eight months doing that great distance.' Thirty years earlier, the letters of Hastings to his wife were invariably duplicated; and the copies of the registers of St. John's Church were habitually sent home in the same manner.[24]

In 1825, three months and seventeen days was still regarded as a quick passage out. Warren Hastings Anderson, the son of Hasting's devoted friend David Anderson, came down to London in the spring of that year to see his brother-in-law Alexander Dewar off to India.[25] They left

[24] Duplicates of the Company's despatches, and of the letters to it from factories in the East, were similarly sent by different ships.

[25] Alexander Cumming Dewar (1803–80), was afterwards a lieutenant-colonel in

(*Continued on p.* 122)

Edinburgh on 10 March. On 3 April, he wrote to his father from Bushey Grove[26]—

> 'Immediately on my arrival in London I set about putting Alex. Dewar's matters in train as soon as possible. We were very kindly received at the India House by Mr. Bebb,[27] who together with Capt. Toone[28] introduced us to Mr. Abingden[29] The ceremony of passing Alex. was a mere farce and was soon accomplished. After some days' consideration we fixed for his passage by the *Charles Grant*, a fine large Indiaman, commanded by Captain Hay of Hope, and he has been very busy making preparations for his departure which will take place about the 9th.'

Dewar went on board the *Charles Grant* at Gravesend on 13 April, and the anchor was weighed on the following day. The Downs were reached on 15 April, and here they were becalmed off Deal for twenty-four hours. On the evening of 18 April, the Lizard was sighted and they ran into a storm which obliged them to stand off the Scillies for four days. Entries in Dewar's diary mention the flogging of seamen and soldiers of the 31st Regiment which was on board. On 1 June, 'Mr. Hay, second mate, died of consumption.' The usual rough weather was met round the Cape, and 'land about Ganjam on the Coromandel coast' was seen on 28 July. Two days later Mr. Conrad Laine, the Hugli pilot, came on board. On 4 August, Dewar went up the river to Calcutta in a pinnace with a friend. 'We were eighty days on board without seeing land and did not touch anywhere.'

(*Continued from p.* 121)

the Bengal Army and succeeded his father as Laird of Vogrie (Midlothian). He married the granddaughter of Colonel Sir John Cumming, who was appointed in 1771 to command the company's forces in the Oudh service and died at St. Helena on 26 August 1786 on his passage to England. His brother James (1783–1869) was in the Bengal Civil Service from 1808 to 1837, and was commercial resident at the Rampore Boalia, in eastern Bengal. Their sister Mary married Warren Hastings Anderson (1796–1875).

*26 Information supplied by Captain David M. Anderson of Bourhouse, Dunbar.

*27 John Bebb: Bengal writer, 1773; Director of the Company from 1805 to 1829; Deputy Chairman 1816; Chairman 1817.

*28 Sweny Toone — a lifelong friend of Warren Hastings whose bodyguard he commanded; Director from 1798 to 1830.

*29 William Abington, clerk to the Committee for passing cadets and assistant surgeons.

Sixteen months later, on 10 December 1825, Dewar records the arrival from Falmouth on the day before of the steam vessel *Enterprise* after a passage of 115 days 'during which time she met with some severe weather,' He says :

> 'She was the first vessel of the kind which attempted the voyage. She looked very well. I was particularly struck with the smallness of her masts. They put out her fires pretty often and sailed.'[30]

The merchants of Calcutta had in the year 1824 offered to present a lakh of rupees to the first steamer which should [make two voyages from England to Bengal, and two from Bengal to England, not averaging above seventy days for each of the four voyages: the disappointing length of the journey by the *Enterprise* prevented her winning this premium, but the subscribers to it voted that part of the sum collected should be given to] her commander, Captain James Henry Johnson, [in recognition of his work in promoting steam navigation between England and India.] He had fought at Trafalgar and was then controller of the steam department of the East India Company. [In 1829 he became superintendent of the Company's steam vessels in Bengal; and] he died at sea off the Cape of Good Hope on 5 May, 1851. There is a tablet to his memory in St. Stephen's Church, Kidderpore.[31] Modern Calcutta has no knowledge of its existence, and yet Johnson was the pioneer of a mighty change. [Two others who should be mentioned in this connection are Lieut. Thomas Waghorn, the main organiser of the Red Sea route to and from India, and his helper, Capt. John Wilson, who commanded the steamer *Hugh Lindsay* on her first trip to Suez from Bombay in 1830.][32]

*30 See the article in the *Englishman* of 24 August 1925, reproduced from the *Field*. [See also Douglas Dewar, *Bygone Days in India*, pp. 89–90, as to the voyage of the *Enterprise*].

*31 [Low, I. 520–1; Dewar, *Bygone Days in India*, pp. 88–9, 91, 95]. In April 1827, the *Enterprise* was at Madras and 'Sir Thomas Munro and a vast crowd of all classes assembled on the Beach to see her manoeuvre for the gratification of the public.' She was not, however, the first steam-vessel in India. The *Diana* of 89 tons was built in 1823 at Kidderpore; she was dismantled in 1836.

32 Low, I. 520; Carey, *Good Old Days of John Company*, I. 390–4.

[The Company's monopoly of trade with the East was now nearing its end. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century it had suffered from the activities of 'interlopers,' whose ships came openly to trade in India, and were helped by some Indian governors and disloyal servants of the Company. Though, with the help of the Crown, the Company largely succeeded in suppressing this interference with its exclusive trade,[33] agitation against the monopoly resulted in a declaration by Parliament in 1694 that all Englishmen had an equal right to traffic in the Asiatic seas, unless prohibited by law; and the 'New Company,' or 'General Society' as it was later styled, was incorporated and given a charter for trading in India by an Act of 1698 (9 & 10 Will. 3. cap. 44) .Mutual destruction was threatened by the rivalry of the two Companies, and, in 1708, they wisely agreed to unite.[34] Later on clandestine trade with India was started by British private merchants through Danish or Portuguese ships or foreign agencies at Ostend, Flushing, etc.; and this had reached high proportions by the end of the eighteenth century.[35] In response to the continuing agitation for free trade to India, the Charter Act of 1793 (33 Geo. 3, cap. 52, sec. 87) required the Company to reserve 3,000 tons annually for British private traders in its outward and homeward ships, but this failed to work properly.[36] Other foreign trade with ports in India was authorised by treaties of 1786 allowing this in the case of both a French and a Spanish Company; and in 1794 a similar agreement was made with the United States of America for direct trade with India, provided they did not

[33] For information regarding this interference and the steps taken to stop it, see Bruce, II. 496–7, 504, 524, 528, 530, 629, 675; Strachey, *Keigwin's Rebellion* (for Bombay); Yule, *Diary of William Hodges* (for Madras and Bengal); and (generally) Helen Crump, *Colonial Admiralty Jurisdiction in the Seventeenth Century*, *s.v.* Interlopers in the Index of each.

[34] Macaulay II. 305–12, 448, 471, 661–4, 708. The Act of 1698 prohibited other subjects of H.M. from trading in the East Indies.

[35] Warren Hastings, *Review of the State of Bengal* (1786), pp. 82–3, 145–6; Philips, pp. 77, 78–9, 107–10; Furber, pp. 135–44, 152–9.

[36] Bruce, III. 142; Philips, pp. 78, 107.

combine it with circuitous trade *via* Europe.[37] This proviso was said to have been violated, and in any case the rapid growth of American trade had alarmed the Directors by the time the pact lapsed in 1806.[38] The closing of the European ports by Napoleon and the long continuance of the war with France had led to a decline in British trade; and in 1811 the Government accepted the demand of outside merchants for admission to Indian markets. After a hard struggle to postpone the evil day, the Company had to submit to losing its monopoly of trade with India under the Charter Act of 1813 (53 Geo. 3, cap. 155).[39] The private trade that resulted proved to be on a far more profitable and extensive scale than had been that of the Company, and a consolidating Act of 1823 (4 Geo. 4, cap. 81) declared that it might be carried on in British vessels with all places within the limits of the Company's charter, except China.[40] Finally,] the exclusive privilege of trade with China was also taken away by the Charter Act of 1833 (3 & 4 Will. 4, cap. 85), with effect from 22 April 1834;[41] and by the end of that year the last of the Indiamen had been sold to private firms, some to end their days as coal hulks or under a foreign flag.[42]

We get a picture of the mail steamer from Bombay in Dr. Henry Moses' *Recollections of India*, a book published in 1850 (pp. 38–9).

> 'When we were within a few days' sail of India we were rudely summoned by the commander of the *Sesostris*, a steamer frigate, to heave to and bear tidings to the great men of Bombay that she had been out six days in a hurricane, but had weathered the gale and was

[37] [Philips, pp. 47–8, 106. Like other foreign traders, the Americans profited by extensive remittances to Europe through bills of exchange drawn in consideration of advances made to them in India (ibid. 105, 107). The first American vessel to arrive in India appeared off Pondicherry in December 1784 (Furber, pp. 144), and American trade with China began about the same time.] The first American ship to reach Canton was the *Empress of China*, 360 tons, of New York, which anchored in the river in August, 1784 (Morse, II. 95).

[38] Philips, p. 156.

[39] Ilbert, pp. 75–82; Philips, pp. 181–92.

[40] Ilbert, p. 83; Philips, pp. 192, 250.

[41] Ilbert, pp. 84–5; Philips, pp. 287–95.

[42] Chatterton, p. 304.

now going safely with her passengers and mailbags to Aden. As we were obliged to haul in pretty close and were out of compliment obliged to take in our stern-sails, I had an opportunity of seeing this beautiful vessel, the property of the Honourable East India Company. Her quarter deck was crowded by a strange collection of black and white faces of every caste and colour; and under the cabin-windows might be seen — what a tempting sight to us who had been so long at sea! — nets filled with all sorts of vegetables, fruit, fresh meat, and other good things necessary for the voyage. Away went the *Sesostris* rolling, pitching and smoking over the mountain waves which the late storm had raised up.'

It was a hundred years since the young Clive had spent over a year upon his first voyage to India (p. 109) [The steamer was now superseding the sailing-ship. Yet the Blackwall Frigates which succeeded the Company's East Indiamen[43] still took much the same time over the voyage to India as the latter in 1825 (p. 121)]. Thus Dr. Moses, who came out in a sailing ship round the Cape, was three and a half months at sea; and this was exactly the length of the voyage of the 93rd Highlanders in 1857. Embarking at Portsmouth on 1 June in the *Belle Isle*, an old 84-gun two-decker, they went by the old course past Madeira and the Cape Verde islands and anchored in Simons Bay on 9 August. Here the first news of the outbreak of the Mutiny was received by them, and their destination hurriedly altered from China to India. On the forenoon of 12 August, the *Belle Isle* continued her voyage 'making all sail day and night for Calcutta,' and reached the pilot station at the Sandheads on 19 September, thirty-eight days after leaving the Cape, and three and a half months from the day of their departure from Portsmouth.[44]

The tale of disaster to the Company's ships is a long one. Between the years 1700 and 1818, no less than 160 Indiamen were lost by wreck, burning or capture.[45] A high

[43] These were ships much in the same style as the Indiamen, built and owned by firms formerly at Blackwall, such as Joseph Soames, Wigram and Green (Lubbock, *passim*; Chatterton, pp. 304–5; *Enc. Brit.*, xx. 509).

[44] W. Forbes Mitchell, *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny* (Macmillan, 1893).

[45] Hardy's Register (1818), pp. 360–3.

proportion of the first was due to foundering; but fire was another peril of the sea. The *Foulis* (Captain George Blachford) left Madras for Fort Marlborough (Bencoolen) on 18 March 1791, crowded with troops and passengers. She was never heard of again and no trace of wreckage or of any survivor was discovered. It was conjectured that she must have been destroyed by fire.[46]

Two of the wrecks have become classic. The *Grosvenor*, an Indiaman of 729 tons under the command of Captain John Coxon, called at Madras in April 1782, on her way to Europe from Calcutta. She was full of passengers, and many prominent members of Bengal society were on board, including William Hosea, the Chief at Moorshedabad, who was taking home the six year old son of Sir Robert Chambers, as well as his own wife and family; Charles Newman, the advocate; and the wives of the captain and Alexander Logie, the chief officer, whom they had married in Calcutta. All went well until 4 August, when the ship ran ashore on the coast of Africa, some five hundred miles from the Cape. One hundred and thirty-five persons, of whom several were women and children, reached the land: but none were ever heard of again except three seamen and a cabin boy who made their way by land to Cape Town.[47] The wreck is still visible, although buried in sand; and the story was that there is a considerable quantity of diamonds on board.

The wreck of the *Halsewell* on the island of Purbeck off the Dorset coast on 6 January 1786, created no less sensation. In an engraving by Pollard from a painting by Robert Smirke, R.A., which was published in the same

[46] The purser of the *Foulis* was Edward Farington, one of the brothers of Joseph Farington, R.A. (See author's notes in *Bengal: Past and Present*, vol. XXIV. pp. 7, 39, 44).

[47] One of these men, John Hynes, was subsequently a seaman on the *Manship*, which sailed from the Downs on 30 December 1785, and anchored at Diamond Harbour on 9 June 1786, George Carter, the painter, was on board and obtained from Hynes the particulars on which he based the *Narrative of the Loss of the Grosvenor*, published by him in 1791. (See article by Sir William Foster in *Bengal: Past and Present*, XXIX. 3–4).

year,[48] the commander, Richard Pierce, is represented on the poop with his two daughters, his two nieces, and three other young women who all perished with him. Of the officers, the second mate (Henry Meriton), the third and sixth mates, and two midshipmen were alone saved. Seventy Lascars were drowned, and more than thirty others among the passengers and crew. The name of Pierce first appears in Hardy's Register as third officer of the *Horseden* in 1762. He had acquired 'a respectable fortune' as the result of the seven voyages which he had made during the twenty-six ensuing years, and intended this to be his last.[49] Before his appointment to the *Halsewell* in 1779, he had commanded the *Earl of Ashburnham* from 1769 to 1773.[50]

The Dorset coast was responsible also for the wreck of the *Earl of Abergavenny*, a fine Indiaman of 1,200 tons register, which ran aground through the incompetence of the pilot, on the Shambles off Portland Bill on 5 February 1805, four days after leaving Portsmouth on a voyage to Bengal and China. Three hundred lives were lost, and a cargo valued at £300,000. Her captain, who went down with her, was John Wordsworth, younger brother of the poet. He was in his thirty-fourth year and had obtained command of her in 1801, after two voyages, as fourth officer, in the *Osterley* and second officer in the *Duke of Montrose*. This was his third voyage in the *Earl of Abergavenny*. On the previous voyage to China (1803–4) he had played an honourable part in Captain Nathaniel Dance's action off Pulo Aor,[51] and had been suitably rewarded by

*[48] A copy of the engraving was to be seen at the Victoria Memorial Hall. Robert Smirke, R.A. (1752–1845) was the father of Sir Robert Smirke (1780–1867) and Sydney Smirke (1798–1877), both Royal Academicians and architects. He also painted a picture of the wreck of the *Grosvenor* which was engraved by R. Pollard in 1784. [A reproduction will be found in Hannay's *The Sea Trader*, opp. p. 64].

*[49] *Calcutta Gazette*, 30 July 1786.

*[50] This was the 'old Indiaman' which was specially chartered in 1774 to take out Francis, Clavering and Monson to Bengal. The Judges were conveyed on the *Anson* [cf. Hickey, I. 311; Busteed, p. 65]. Both ships sailed from St. Helens (Isle of Wight) on 1 April 1774, reached Madras on 21 September, and anchored at Kedgeree on 14 October.

[51] For an account of this brief action, see pp. 170–2 *post*.

the Directors. William Wordsworth's own account of the disaster is given by F. W. H. Myers in his biography of the poet (*English Men of Letters*, pp. 69–70); 'She struck at 5 p.m. Guns were fired and she was gotten off the rocks at half past seven but was found to be waterlogged. They hoped, however, that she might still be beached on Weymouth sands, and with this view continued pumping and baling until eleven, when she sank. My brother was last seen on the hen-coop, which is the point from which he could overlook the whole ship, dying as he had lived in the very place and point where his duty stationed him.' Elsewhere he says: 'My writing, printed and manuscript, were his delight and one of the chief solaces of his long voyages.' John Wordsworth spent eight months with his brother at Grasmere in 1800, and intended to settle there 'and use his savings to set the poet free from worldly care.'[52]

[The coast of Cornwall was notorious for its wreckers. An instance is that of the *Albemarle*, which in December 1708 was driven ashore near Polperro in a gale that 'shattered several ships' between Falmouth and Plymouth. Robert Bullock, the Company's agent there, wrote that 'the savage inhabitants are ready to plunder . . . and cut the throats' of any inquisitors; and the owners of the *Rochester*, a sister-ship, begged for pilots from London for fear 'these Cornish pylots may run her aground or do some other mischief to make a wreck of her.' Thomas Woolley, the Company's secretary, instructed Bullock to prosecute all persons against whom sufficient proof was forthcoming that they were concerned in embezzling the *Albemarle's* goods, since the Company 'would do what in them lyes to deterr all others from the like barbarous and cruell practices which are against the common reason of all mankind

[52] [cf. Parkinson's note on John Wordsworth at pp. 376-7.] There are allusions to John Wordsworth in the *Lines on a Picture of Peel Castle in a Storm*, *The Fir Grove Path*, and *Nature and the Poet*. A picture of the *Earl of Abergavenny* off Southsea was painted in 1801 by Thomas Luny and purchased for the India Office in 1896 from Mr. R. Wordsworth Smith (Foster, *Catalogue of Pictures, etc., in the India Office*, edn. 1924, p. 28).

that when persons and goods have escaped the merciless Elements they instead of expecting relief from their own countrymen and Christians should find them more merciless enemys.' But it was easier said than done, and much difficulty was found in carrying out these orders. Though some were duly prosecuted and convicted, evidence was not easily obtained owing to intimidation by the wreckers, and it was complained that false and malicious information given by them had led to the prosecution of a man who assisted the captain and the crew by saving their lives and the little goods which were brought ashore before the wreck.][53]

Reefs off the Cape Verde islands were the scene of at least two wrecks. We read in the *Calcutta Gazette* of 28 August 1787, that 'news has been received in London of the loss of the *Hartwell* Indiaman (Captain Edward Fiott) three leagues to the north-east of Bona Vista'.[54] The accident was attributed to 'the bad discipline of the crew, who four days before had behaved in a most extraordinary mutinous manner.' There was no loss of life but 'the loss to the Company will amount to £80,000.' The *Hartwell* was on her maiden voyage to China and the wreck occurred on 24 May, rather more than a month after she had left the Downs. Nineteen years later, on 20 April 1806, the *Lady Burges* (Captain Archibald Swinton), outward bound for Madras and Bengal, struck a rock between St. Jago and Bona Vista. Thirty-four were drowned; and among them were three midshipmen, of whom the son of Archibald Swinton was one.[55]

[Another wreck that took place on a dreaded shoal known as the 'Bassas de India' in the lower part of the Mozambique Channel, also deserves notice for its peculiar circumstances, which are fully related in Sir William Foster's *John Company*.[56] In 1738 the *Sussex* (Captain William Gostlin), when

[53] Mar. R. Miscellanies, vol. II, pp. 66, 68, 72, 75, 83, 88, 95, 275, 330, 340–2, etc.

[54] i.e., Boa Vista, the most easterly of the Cape Verde islands.

[*53] See 'The Journals of Archibald Swinton' by Sir Evan Cotton in *Bengal: Past and Present*, XXXI. 35.

[56] In chap. XII, pp. 198–207.

homeward bound from Canton in company with the *Winchester*, lost her main and mizzen masts in a gale near the Cape of Good Hope. Next day the weather moderated and most of the water she had shipped was pumped out of her, while a new foresail enabled her to keep company with her consort. Yet the captain and officers insisted on abandoning the ship, in spite of the protests of thirty of her crew, and showed a desire to hasten her loss by stoving in the longboat and refusing to give the ship's longitude. Sixteen of the sailors stuck to her, but the majority, after plundering the vessel and even trying to cut down the foresail, left with the captain, officers and supercargoes, and were taken aboard the *Winchester*, which then bore away. After doing what they could to repair damages and ease the ship, the remaining men managed to bring her to St. Augustine's Bay in Madagascar. After a stay of three weeks, in which the *Sussex* was put into a fairly serviceable state, they sailed again; but on the second day out she ran aground on the shoal already mentioned.

Through a mishap in lowering the pinnace to get away, only five of the men succeeded in reaching the shore of the islet. They patched up the damaged pinnace, and after a voyage of seventeen days again reached Madagascar. Here they suffered hardship and illness resulting in the deaths of four of them. The sole survivor was John Dean, who underwent detention against his will at Mahabo, but was eventually allowed to leave for the neighbouring port of Youngowl at the mouth of the River Manarivo. Here to his great joy he found the Indiaman *Prince William* in the roads, and he fortunately met her captain, who let him go aboard, as he was in fear of being taken away by the natives. This was on 19 July 1739; and Dean, who was taken in the ship to Bombay, did not reach England till over two years later. Meanwhile the Company's Directors who were dissatisfied with the reasons given for their abandonment of the *Sussex*, had suspended the commander, officers and members of the crew concerned. In 1740, after receiving Dean's narrative

of the events, which was sent ahead of him, they filed a suit against Captain Gostlin to recover damages, which in July 1743, were decreed to the extent of £25,000. The Directors in November 1743, rewarded Dean, for his brave devotion to duty, with a pension of £100 a year and one of £50 to his wife, should she survive him. They also gave him fifty guineas 'for his present support', and in 1745 appointed him to the post of head porter in one of their warehouses. A portrait of him, painted by Willem Verelst at the Company's desire, is in the National Portrait Gallery — the only one of an ordinary sailor in that collection.[57]

In the early hours of 17 July 1755, the Indiaman *Doddington* struck a rock off one of the Bird islands in a corner of Algoa Bay on the south-east coast of Africa, and broke to pieces in less than twenty minutes. Her navigators had imagined they were eighty leagues from land, and in the darkness the rock was supposed to be uncharted on the high seas. Most of the twenty-three survivors were washed ashore on the island, which was uninhabited. The wreck is memorable for two reasons. One was the warning given, for over one hundred years in published sailing directions, of the danger to mariners from what became known as the Doddington rock, until the erection of a lighthouse and other conditions of modern navigation removed the risk. The second was the resourcefulness shown by the survivors. Her commander, Captain Samson, perished, but the chief mate escaped and wrote a detailed account of the sequel, which the late Sir Richard Temple has rescued from oblivion. Fortunately among the survivors were the ship's carpenter and a Swedish sailor who had been a smith and who made a forge with the help of a pair of bellows that was picked up from the wreckage. This also provided a carpenter's adze, plenty of timber, two flints and gunpowder serving for tinder, and a mariner's compass, as well as food and drink. They completed a sloop thirty feet

[57] *John Company*, pp. 197–8, 208. A reproduction of the portrait (of which a copy used to hang in the India Office) appears facing p. 25 of this work.

long and twelve wide, which they named the *Happy Deliverance*. On 18 February 1756, they sailed for the mainland, and two months later reached Delagoa Bay, whence most of them went on to Madagascar. There they found an Indiaman, which took them to Madras.][58]

On 20 August 1792, the *Winterton* (Captain George Dundas), on her outward bound voyage to the Coast and Bay, was wrecked on the coast of Madagascar. Several lives were lost both of the passengers and crew; but among those who escaped were six young ladies, who with others remained on the island until they were taken off by a pilot schooner dispatched from Bengal.[59] Ten years earlier on 28 August 1782, the *Brilliant* (Captain Charles Mears), which was on her maiden voyage out, went ashore on the island of Johanna. She had on board some 250 non-commissioned officers and men, as well as seven officers of the 15th Hanoverian Regiment, of whom most were saved. Three of the officers, however, died of hardship and exposure on shore; and the survivors who obtained possession of a boat and set sail for Bombay, were driven far out of their course by a storm and suffered severely from want of water and provisions. Eventually three officers and fourty-four other ranks joined a detachment of the regiment at Tellicherry at the end of 1783. John Zoffany, R.A., is stated to have painted a picture of the wreck.[60] [The artist had left England in 1783, to pursue his fortunes in India, and, though the Company had prohibited him from going in an Indiaman, had managed to do this as a supposed midshipman in the *Lord Macartney*, who was entered in the ship's log as having 'ran' (deserted) at Calcutta on 15 September 1783][61]

[58] *Ind. Antiquary*, XXIX, 294 ff. 330 ff; XXX. 451 ff., 491 ff. *[59] Hickey, IV. p. 101. *[60] *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1810 (vol. LXXX, p. 658), quoted in *Bengal: Past and Present*, XXX. 171.

61. It has been stated, and in print, that Zoffany returned from India on the *Brilliant*, but this is not possible, The picture that he painted of the wreck of the *Brilliant* has often been mentioned, but no one appears to know where it is now. See *John Zoffany, R.A., His Life and Letters*, by Lady Victoria Manners and Dr. G. C. Williamson, London, 1920, pp. 81, 116, 125.

In Eastern waters, the Madras roads had a bad name. Captains were forbidden to remain off the Coromandel coast from 11 October to 11 December. Insurances ceased from Point Palmyras to Cape Comorin, and to herald the approach of bad weather the 'flagstaff of Madras was struck.'[62] Neglect to observe this warning occasioned the loss of the *Chatham* on 30 October 1768. She had arrived at Fort Saint George on her homeward voyage from Bengal on 20 October. Here she was detained by the Governor (Charles Bourchier) and his Council, in order to convey to the Directors an offical account of the peace which had just been concluded with Hyder Ali. The commander, Arthur Morris, lodged a formal protest and remained on shore with the purser Evan Evans. They were the only two survivors of the tragedy which followed. A violent gale came up: 'The prodigious height and fury of the surf prevented all communication with the shipping,' and 'the roaring of the wind far surpassed the report of the largest guns.'[63] Every precaution had been taken for the safety of the *Chatham*. 'She had four anchors ahead, was out in thirty-five fathoms (of) water, at a distance of between seven and eight miles from the shore, her topmasts, topsail yards, and lower yards struck (and) ports clinched in fore and aft.' There was a full crew of able seamen on board, and Robert Sedgley, the chief officer, was esteemed to be one of the most capable in the service. The *Chatham*, nevertheless, suddenly vanished from sight; and it was supposed that she must have foundered at her anchors, although no trace of wreckage was ever discovered.

On 18 April 1783, the *Duke of Atholl* was destroyed by fire in Madras roads. Hickey was then at Madras, on his way to Calcutta for the second time, and breakfasting at Government House with Lord Macartney; an explosion was

*62 cf. Hickey, II. 203.

*63 Hickey (I. 171–2) related the story as it was told to him at dinner at Government House, Madras, in May 1769. The narrator was the Governor, whose account was later confirmed by Alexander Davidson, a member of the Madras civil service (ibid. 170, 172).

heard and the party, which included the captains of several Indiamen, on going to the windows, saw 'a prodigious column of smoke' ascending from the middle of the fleet, which was lying at anchor in the roads. Captain James Rattray, of the *Duke of Atholl*, at once exclaimed that it was his ship which was on fire; and so it proved. Boats were at once put out from the different ships, but the explosion, which took place twenty minutes after the fire broke out between decks, was so severe that four of the lieutenants commanding the boats were blown up, and the ship rapidly sank. The accident was conjectured to be due to the carelessness of a steward, who let fall a candle into a cask of spirits in the lazaretto. A few survivors were taken off, and in a line engraving by Gillray, published in 1785, the last boatload is seen pulling away, with the ship blowing up in the background.[64]

The years 1782 and 1783 were specially disastrous for the Company's ships. The total of the casualties numbered ten. Besides the *Duke of Atholl*, two other Indiamen were destroyed by fire: the *Fairford* (Captain John Haldane) in Bombay Harbour on 15 June 1782, and the *Duke of Kingston* (Captain Justinian Nutt) off the northern coast of Ceylon on 20 August 1783.[65] Two were taken by the French: the *Fortitude* (Captain Charles Gregorie) in the Bay of Bengal on 23 January 1783, on her way home from China, and the *Blandford* (whose commander Captain Peter Pigou, had been left behind in Calcutta and died there on 7 December 1783) off Ganjam on 11 January 1783. Finally, four Indiamen were wrecked in addition to the *Grosvenor*, between 10 April and 15 October 1682, viz., the *Hinchinbrooke* (Captain

*64 Captain Rattray took home the *Nerbudda* packet which left the Hugli on 28 November 1783, and arrived in the Downs on 8 April, 1784; he subsequently commanded the *Phoenix* (1786–87) on a voyage to the Coast and Bay. He had been captain of the *Gatton* when she was captured with five other Indiamen on 9 August, 1780, by the combined French and Spanish fleets. [A reproduction of Gillray's picture, from a copy in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, appears opp. p. 160.]

*65 Three passengers, twenty-two of the crew, and thirty-two men, six women, and two children of the 52nd regiment, lost their lives in this disaster.

Arthur Maxwell) in the Hugli, the *Earl of Hertford* (Captain Daniel Clarke) in Madras Roads, the *Earl of Dartmouth* (Captain David Thomson) at the Car Nicobar on her way home from Bengal, and finally the *Brilliant* on the island of Johanna (p. 133).

The years 1808 and 1809 were likewise full of misfortune. Four Indiamen foundered together on their way home — the *Lady Jane Dundas* (Captain John Eckford), the *Calcutta* (Captain Edward Maxwell), the *Bengal* (Captain Richard Sharpe), and the *Jane Duchess of Gordon* (Captain John Cameron). On 14 March 1809 they 'parted company from the fleet off the Mauritius' and were 'not since heard of,' This calamity, which was probably the greatest which overtook the Company's ships, is mentioned by Hickey in the concluding pages of the fourth volume of his *Memoirs*, where he gives a complete list of the passengers, of whom many were women and children, and not one survived. In the *Lady Jane Dundas* was Lieut.-General Hay MacDowall, the late Commander-in-Chief at Madras, who had been superseded in connection with the mutiny of European officers in that Presidency,[66] and Lieut.-Colonel Orr of the 12th Regiment and his wife and two children. Among the passengers on board the *Calcutta* were the Rev. Paul Limrick, chaplain at Fort William, Mrs. Frederick Arnott, the sister-in-law of Sir Charles D'Oyly the artist civilian,[67] and William Scott, a Bengal writer of 1796, and his wife. Mrs. Scott was the daughter of Thomas Evans,

66 The General, who sympathised with the mutiny, had in fact resigned his post of commander-in-chief, and was 'removed' by the Madras Government only after he had sailed; see Sir A. Cardew, *The White Mutiny* (Constable and Co., 1929) p.p. 41, 51, 54, 62. A letter from Sir Edward Pellew, the admiral of the fleet (reproduced at p. 189 of the same work) suggests that the four ships were lost in a hurricane a few days after they left it.

*67 They were the daughters of William Greer of Keyhaven, Hampshire, who had commanded the *Belvedere* Indiaman and of Harriet D'Oyly, the sister of Warren Hastings' friend, Sir John Hadley D'Oyly, the sixth baronet [cf. p. 39 n]. Harriet Greer, the eldest, married Frederick Maitland Arnott, a shipmate of Hickey's on the *Seahorse* in 1777, who was murdered at Krishnaghur in 1807 [Hickey, IV. 353–4]. Charlotte, the second, married Robert Conyngham, a Bengal writer and was painted by Chinnery. Marian, the youngest, married Sir Charles D'Oyly, the seventh baronet, and died at Calcutta in 1814.

one of Hickey's Calcutta friends, and had already been wrecked with her father and 'either a niece or natural daughter of his,' when coming out in the *Earl of Abergavenny* in 1805. They had been saved in one of the ship's boats which, notwithstanding a very rough and boisterous sea, succeeded in reaching the shore.[68]

Equal ill-fortune had attended the homeward fleet in 1808. Three Indiamen, the *Experiment* (Captain John Logan), the *Glory* (Captain Horatio Beevor) and the *Lord Nelson* (Captain William Hutton), parted company from the fleet on 28 October 'in a gale of wind' off the Mauritius, and were 'not since heard of.' [The gallant fight that the last-named ship put up before her capture in August 1803 is related on p. 165.]

A fifth Indiaman foundered in 1809 — the *True Briton* (Captain George Bonham), which parted company from the Bombay ships in the China seas on 13 October, and was 'not since heard of.'[68a] Three more were lost that year — the *Britannia* (Captain Jonathan Birch) of 1,200 tons, with the *Admiral Gardner* (Captain William Eastfield), off the South Foreland, on 25 January, the day after leaving the Downs, and the *Asia* (Captain Henry Tremenheere) in the Hugli on 1 June. Five were taken by the French — two, the *Europe* (Captain William Gelston) and the *Streatham* (Captain John Dale) on 31 May, on their way home from Bengal, and three, the *United Kingdom* (Captain W. P. d'Esterre), the *Windham* (Captain John Stewart), and the *Charlton* (Captain Charles Shortlock) in November on their voyage out to Bengal by French frigates. The two first and the fourth, however, were retaken later on in 1809.

[68] Hickey, iv. 477.

[68a] [Hardy, p. 275]. Captain Bonham's first wife, Pauline, was a daughter of William Lushington, of the Bengal Civil Service. Their son, Lt.-Colonel George William Bonham, Bengal Infantry (d. 1853) was born on board the *Minerva* on 17 July 1797, when on the voyage out to the Coast and Bay (sailed from Portsmouth 6 April 1797). The son of Captain Bonham, by a later marriage, Samuel George Bonham (1803–63) was appointed to the Penang establishment in 1818 and was Governor both of Prince of Wales Island and of Hong Kong. He was created a baronet in 1852. His uncle, Samuel Charles Bonham, was assistant marine superintendent at Bombay, and had commanded the *Norfolk* from 1779 to 1784.

The wreck of the *Antelope* packet (Captain Harry Wilson) on one of the Pelew islands in August 1783, possesses unusual interest, for Devis, the painter, was on board. The vessel reached Macao early in June and, sailing again on 20 July, was lost three weeks later. There were no casualties, and after some time a boat was built in which a return was made to Macao at the beginning of December. Devis' sketches were subsequently incorporated in George Keate's account of the Pelew islands.[70] Captain Wilson, as commander of the *Warley*, took part in Dance's engagement with Linois off Pulo Aor in 1804, and died in 1810.

In 1806 the *Skelton Castle* (Captain Henry Vaughan) was lost at sea in mysterious circumstances. She was outward bound for Bengal and crowded with passengers (including twenty cadets and two field officers) and troops. She sailed from Portsmouth on 24 September with the *Union* and the *Matilda*, a country ship; and when off the Cape on 21 December, the commodore (Captain John MacIntosh of the *Union*) signalled his intention to put in at that port, as several of the ships were in want of water and fresh provisions. The captain of the *Skelton Castle* determined, as he was in need of neither, to avail himself of the fair wind to stand on for Madras. That was the last anything was seen or heard of the ship or of those on board. Hickey, who tells the story (IV. 346), declares that the Captain's fatal decision was influenced by this desire to be 'the first ship of the season at the India market' with his private 'investment.'

Elsewhere (III. 129–30) Hickey gives a graphic account of another sea-tragedy. The *Prince of Wales* (Captain John Price) left Madras on 13 April 1804, for Europe in company with other ships. Off the Cape of Good Hope in June, a severe gale was encountered and the fleet was obliged to lie-to. During the height of the storm and in the middle of an exceptionally dark night, the *Prince of Wales* suddenly diappeared from view, and although, as the commodore's

*[70] See the article by Sir William Foster in *Bengal: Past and Present*, XXIX, 6 ff. [The Company had sent Devis out on the *Antelope* 'as a draughtsman.']

ship, she was in the middle of the fleet, not a trace of her or of those on board was ever discovered. A tremendous sea was running, and it was conjectured that she must have foundered instantaneously. Among the passengers was Major-General Eccles Nixon of the Madras Army, who 'having accumulated a noble fortune and seen all his daughters happily married,' was taking home two of them with their respective children.'

[Another peril, though a rare one, was that of being stranded through shipwreck or otherwise in strange parts where life and liberty might be at stake. The unhappy fate of nearly all those who landed from the *Grosvenor* in South Africa has already been mentioned (p. 127). Occasionally men that landed from a ship were surprised and captured or killed on shore. One such case is given at p. 57. Similarly Hamilton relates how the port of Mogadisha in Somaliland was a dangerous place at which to land, on account of its treacherous inhabitants, and the capture there about 1701 of the purser and four seamen from the *Albemarle*, who must have been put to death or enslavement.[71] Not quite so bad was the lot of thirteen Englishmen from the Indiaman *Persia Merchant*, and eighteen others from the Company's ship *Ann*, who became captives of the King of Kandy in Ceylon. The *Persia Merchant* was wrecked at the Maldives in 1658. Some fifty men got ashore and were treated hospitably by the natives. They bought two boats and sailed for Colombo, but instead reached a place some ninety miles north of it. Here thirteen of them, including William Vassal, a factor from Bengal, were seized and taken to Kandy,[72] the capital of the King of Ceylon. The *Ann* in 1660 had gone to Trincomallee to repair damages she had received in a storm at Masulipatam, and her commander, Captain Robert Knox, his son Robert (a lad of nineteen), John Loveland (the ship's merchant) and thirteen of her

[71] Hamilton, I. 19. The Journal of Francis Rogers (in *Three Sea Journals of Stuart Times*, ed. Bruce S. Ingram, Constable, 1936, p. 187) records his seeing the *Albemarle* at Surat in February 1703, and his hearing of this incident.

[72] *E.F.*, 1655–60, pp. 182–3; *Indian Antiquary*, XXXI, 132–4; *Knox's Ceylon*, p. 215.

crew, were treacherously captured ashore and likewise taken to Kandy. The King's aim seems to have been to keep them as a sort of menagerie, and the inhabitants at his bidding provided them with a sufficiency of food and drink; but they were given no clothes, and most of them had to knit caps for sale or do other peddling trade to earn enough for their other needs. They were indeed kindly treated by the natives, and all but two of the men from the *Ann* formed alliances with Cingalese women. These two were Robert Knox, junior — his father had died in 1661 — and his companion Stephen Rutland, who thereby avoided constant surveillance. This helped them to escape in 1679, and they reached England in September 1680.[73] Knox's account of their captivity and escape is a poignant one; and the King's irrational insistence on refusing to let them go, and doing all he could to prevent any escape, was cruelty to those who, like Knox, found the desire to return to their native country 'greater than all earthly wants.]'[74]

[73] *E.F.*, 1655–60, pp. 394–6; *Knox's Ceylon*, pp. xiii, xiv, 188–93, 196, 200–1, 206–7, 209, 233–4, 250–81.

[74] *Knox's Ceylon*, p. 245. Two others, of whom one (William Hubbard) had been a seaman of the *Ann*, escaped from Kandy in 1709 (ibid., pp. xv, 377).

CHAPTER SIX

Some Famous Fights

[The naval fights dealt with in this chapter are not of lasting fame like the Battle of the Nile or that of Trafalgar: but most of them achieved temporary fame and are still 'famous' as being notable instances, some of victory over the enemy, and others of gallant defence against superior odds. The exceptions are so few as to make them noteworthy.]

An important function on board an Indiaman, after she had got to sea, was 'the making out of the Quarter Bill,' when every person in the ship was assigned an action station either at a great gun or small arms, so that in case of the appearance of an enemy each might know his place.[1] These were no idle precautions, for Indiamen did not a little fighting and usually did it very well, as will appear hereafter.

[The main fighting arose, of course, in wartime, when the Indiamen were exposed to attacks by enemy war-vessels, including privateers; and by far the most numerous, dangerous and effective, took place during the wars with France between 1689 and 1815. Such instances therefore, naturally predominate. But there were other wars, like those with the Dutch in the seventeenth century, or other nations hostile to England, such as Sweden under Charles XII in 1714–18.[2] Indiamen suffered in consequence.

[1] cf. Parkinson, pp. 237, 284.

[2] Charles XII aided Cardinal Alberoni's ambitious aims for Spain in that period

(*Continued on p.* 142)

Another almost ever-present danger was that arising from piracy. Thus local pirates, known as the Sanganians, the Angrias, and the Malabars, frequented the west coast of India. Even on the west coast of Africa the ships were liable to be attacked, though such occasions were rare. Pirates were also to be found in the Mozambique Channel, at the mouth of the Red Sea, and in the Persian Gulf, as well as farther ahead on the way to China. European pirates, like Every or Avery, and Kidd, were another great nuisance during parts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In the Atlantic there was also danger of attack from Turkish, Algerian, Barbary and other pirates. Though the Mediterranean was their main haunt, they sometimes operated outside that sea, even up to the English Channel; and in the seventeenth century it was usual for the Company to direct its ships to steer at least 30 leagues to the westward of the Madeiras in order to avoid them.[3] An instance of their plundering an Indiaman is that of the *Morning Star*: she was chartered for a voyage to the Coast and Bay, and off Cadiz in 1669 was robbed of three chests of gold and silver by an Algerian man-of-war.[4] And even when an uneasy peace existed with the pirates in 1676, the Company had anxiety lest its ships should be seized and taken to Algiers for want of the requisite passes, which were valid for only one year.[5]

Usually the Royal Navy gave no protection to Indiamen in eastern waters, and even in the Atlantic very little use was made of convoys, in the sense of escorts by naval vessels, till the wars with France from 1792. This was mainly due to their being, like the Dutch East Indiamen, strongly constructed and well armed ships, expected to be capable of defending themselves against the attacks of pirates and

(*Continued from p.* 141)

because of that King's hostility to the House of Hanover, so became hostile to England with George I on the throne. (J. R. Green, *Short History of England*, p. 707.)

For an instance of a Swedish privateer proposing to operate in the Channel against an East Indiaman in 1717, see Chatterton, pp. 141–2.

[3] e.g., *Ct. Min.*, 1674–6 and 1677–9, *s.v.* Pirates (in index).

[4] *Ct. Min.*, 1668–70, pp. 85, 169; 1671–3, pp. 21, 49, 97, 176; Barlow, p. 150.

[5] *Ct. Min.*, 1674–6, pp. 360–1; *Catalogue of Pepysian MSS*, III. 388–9; IV. 363–4.

privateers.[6] From the first they were provided with armament: thus one of the four ships sent on the first expedition under James Lancaster, in 1601, mounted some forty guns, and each of the others had twenty-four.[7] In 1676 the Directors required all ships of 500 tons to carry 24 guns: and another resolution of 1677 allowed 28 guns for a 'three decker.'[8] The special squadron of ten ships that was sent to India in 1672–3 during the third Dutch war, had heavier armament of from 30 to 36 guns per ship: and in 1677 the ratio is said to have been as high as from 40 to 70.[9] In the first part of the eighteenth century the proportion remained about 30 to 36, but later on with mounting of guns of heavier calibre it was on a diminished scale; thus in 1806, ships from 500 to 600 tons each had from 12 to 26, 800 ton ships from 26 to 30, and the 1,200-tonner from 30 to 44.[10]

One result of this policy was that the commander of an Indiaman was entitled to regard himself as almost on the footing of a commander in the Royal Navy: and friction often resulted between the two sets of officers.[11] Also in the early days of the Company the commanders naturally objected to the President at Surat taking command of the ship in which he returned to England.[12] In 1631 the Company vetoed this claim, but it seems to have lingered on; thus when President William Fremlen went home in 1644 on board the *Dolphin*, he presided over consultations as to her movements. A stone said to be the earliest English memorial in the island of St. Helena records the dates of the *Dolphin's* arrival and departure, and shows Fremlen as her 'commander' with the name of her real captain, John Prowd, below him as her 'master.'[13]

[6] Fayle, p. xxxi; Chatterton, pp. 124, 146, 158, etc.

[7] *Voyages of Sir James Lancaster*, ed. Foster, p. xxv.

[8] *Ct. Min.* 1674–6, p. 329; 1677–9, p. 124.

[9] F. R. Letter Books, vol. v, p. 30; Bruce, II, 312: Chatterton, p. 124.

[10] Chatterton, pp. 144–5, 278; Parkinson, pp. 150–6: cf. James, I. 26–8, 30–4, as to guns in the British Navy.

[11] cf. Parkinson, pp. 308–9; Chatterton, pp. 146–7.

[12] Foster, *English Factories in India*, 1624–9, pp. 277, 295; 1630–3, p. 40.

[13] Ibid., 1642–5, pp. 188, 229, 247, 259, 260: Gosse, p. 38, and picture opp. p. 33.

The main result, however, was that up to the beginning of the eighteenth century, there are comparatively few instances of applications for convoys to go under Naval protection. During the three Dutch wars in the last half of the seventeenth century, the Indiamen ordinarily did without this escort and usually it was only to protect their ships in the English Channel, and when approaching it on their return voyages, or in an exceptional emergency, such as the unopposed raid by the Dutch Fleet up the Medway in 1667, that the Company applied to the navy for 'convoys.'[14] Again, in 1678 when relations with France were critical and French privateers were present in the Channel, Mr. Secretary Pepys was requested to obtain the King's leave for a convoy to see the Company's ships start safely on their way to Surat, and this was granted.[15] After war began with France in 1689, the Company was authorised to commission their commanders to seize French vessels as prizes, which it did;[16] and this would be an additional reason for Indiamen dispensing with Naval protection. On the other hand they were seldom allowed to sail singly in war-time, and the general practice was for them to sail together in batches, according to their destinations. Fear of the activities of enemy warships and privateers in the Channel and the Atlantic, however, led to occasional desire for naval protection at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and by 1703, the Company was frequently asking the Lord High Admiral to provide convoys for returning ships, especially when a cargo of exceptional value was thought to be in danger.[17] It was not till 1792 that the Secret Committee appointed for the

[14] *Ct. Min.*, 1650–4, 1664–7, 1671–3, index (*s.v.* East India Company asks for convoys); Court Books, vol. XXV, p. 301. The original petition for such a convoy to Oliver Cromwell in 1657 is still extant. (*Ct. Min.*, 1655–9, p. 181).

[15] *Ct. Min.*, 1677–9, p. 157: N.R.S. *Catalogue of Pepysian MSS*, IV. 439.

[16] F.R. Letter Books, vol. IX, pp. 52, 53, 55, etc.

[17] Miscellanies, vols. I and II, passim: Philips, *Bulletin of the Oriental School of Studies*, X. pt. II, p. 304: Chatterton, p. 140. When compulsory convoys for merchantmen were introduced in 1803, the ships of the East India Company were exempted (43 Geo. 3, cap. 57, sec. 6).

'better security' of the Company's ships at sea suggested that the convoy system should extend to the protection of their homeward voyage from the Cape of Good Hope to St. Helena: and the proposal was adopted.[18] This continued to the end of the Napoleonic war.[19] The extent of naval assistance of course varied, but it was substantially increased when Sir Edward Hughes arrived with a strong force as Commander-in-Chief in the East Indies (1782–4), and in the time of his successors, such as William Cornwallis, the brother of the Viceroy (1789–94), Peter Rainier (1794–1802), and Sir Edward Pellew, already mentioned (1804–9).[20] This help was often effective, as in the case of the capture of the *Piémontaise* by H.M.S. *San Fiorenzo* (p. 164): but probably owing to the many demands upon the services of the British Navy there was inadequate protection in the Bay of Bengal from 1798 to 1807.[21] The Company gave some slight relief by providing two ships in 1799, 1804 and 1805 to cruise in Indian waters for the protection of trade.[22]

Colonel Biddulph in his book *The Pirates of Malabar*, gives a comprehensive account of the depredations not only by pirates on the Malabar coast, including the Angrias of Janjira situated some fifty miles below Bombay, but also of European piracy in Eastern waters. As early as 1636 the *Roebuck* which was sent on a piratical mission from London, caused trouble to the Company's factors at Surat through

[18] Philips, *The East India Company*, pp. 88–9: *Bulletin, &c.*, X, pt. III, p. 704. Previously the Company had on rare occasions asked for a convoy of men-at-war from the Cape and St. Helena (e.g., G. R. Miscellanies, vol. I, petition of 9 December 1703, p. 52).

[19] cf. Parkinson, p. 308.

[20] Brenton, I. 334, 346; III, 349: IV, 394; James, I, 131–3, 336; III, 283: IV, 93, 180.

[21] cf. the complaints of the Calcutta merchants as to losses in 1798–1807, reproduced by Hickey, IV. 412–21, and the statement in the *Bengal Gazette* of 16 September 1781, that 'for nearly twelve months the coast between Madras and Palmeiras has been infested by French privateers, who have unmolested reigned triumphant, to the great impediment of trade.' Between 1803 and 1809 French privateers sank over 15,000 tons of the Company's shipping in the Indian Ocean; and the nuisance did not cease till the capture of their base (the islands of Bourbon and Mauritius) in 1810 (Philips, pp. 79, 155).

[22] I.O. List of Mar. R., pp. XIX–XX.

her seizure of a Mughal vessel with a valuable cargo. John Prowd, then master of the Company's ship *Swan*, came across the *Roebuck* in the Comoro islands; an action ensued in which he failed to capture her but succeeded in forcing her to give up the stolen goods.[23] In 1666, a Dutch corsair, called Lambert Hugo, created further trouble for the Surat factors by his piracy in the Red Sea.[24] Twenty years later this recurred when two ships under English colours were reported to have captured vessels in that same sea to the value of Rs. 600,000. Other pirates now appeared in rapid succession, and from 1689 to 1700 the Eastern Seas were 'pestered with' them.

In two cases they were reinforced by mutiny of some of the Company's sailors who wished to join in the rich harvest from piracy: these were the crews of the *Mocha* frigate and the ketch *Josiah*, who plotted the mutiny in 1696 at Bombay. The commander of the *Mocha*, being in want of men at that place had taken on some hands that had been in pirate ships, and these corrupted others of the two crews. While the *Mocha* was off Achin, the mutineers got possession of the ship's arms, killed the commander, Captain Edgecombe, and put afloat in the pinnace 27 officers and men who refused to join them. During the next three years she caused much loss to shipping in the Indian Ocean. The career of the *Josiah* was fortunately shorter. At the Nicobars, while the mutineers were ashore, two men left aboard (one of whom had been forced to join the mutiny against his will, and the other was a lukewarm pirate) cut the cable and managed alone to bring the ship in safely to Achin.[25]

Every's piracy in 1694–5 resulted in the imprisonment of Sir John Gayer and his colleagues at Surat for eleven months. But he, Kidd, and the others, kept clear of Indiamen as a rule: the main exception seems to have been the

[23] Biddulph, pp. 3–4; *Ct. Min.*, 1835–9, pp. xxi–ii; *E. F.*, 1634–6, pp. 175, 202, 302, 309.

[24] *E.F.*, 1665–7, p. 32.

[25] Biddulph, pp. 32–3; Barlow, pp. 466–7; Bruce's *Annals*, III. 213.

case of the *Dorrill* in 1698. In July of that year, when on her way to China, she was attacked in the Straits of Malacca by the *Mocha* (renamed *Resolution*) commanded by the pirate Culliford, and after a hot engagement of three hours made him sheer off with heavy losses on both sides.[26] The Red Sea was also a favourite haunt of these pirates, and in 1696 there were five such ships under English colours. In the following year the Indiaman *Sceptre*, commanded by Edward Barlow, had a brief encounter below the Bab Islands with Captain Kidd in the *Adventure Galley*, which had been commissioned by the Admiralty to proceed against French shipping but had turned pirate. The two vessels exchanged shots, but Kidd scented danger — a Dutch man-of-war was at hand — and managed to get away.[27] In 1699 four men-of-war were sent from England to scourge these pirates, and two more came in 1703; they had, however, little but a restraining effect through their presence. The execution of Captain Kidd and others engaged in this nefarious traffic, together with the passing of the Piracy Act of 1701 (11 and 12 Will. 3, cap. 7), which facilitated the arrest and trial of pirates, did more to help towards the suppression of these marauders.[28]

The Madagascar pirates and others, however, still lingered on, and in 1720 the *Cassandra*, bound for Bombay and Surat under Captain James Macrae, was captured by the well-known pirate, Edward England, at Johanna. She was basely deserted by her companion, the *Greenwich*, as well as by an Ostend ship that had agreed to stand by them; and though her crew valiantly fought the two pirate ships, *Victory* and *Fancy*, for over two hours, they had to give in after the *Cassandra* went ashore under fire, with thirteen men killed and twenty-four wounded, including the commander.

[26] Biddulph, pp. 3–4; Anderson, *The English in Western India*, pp. 260–2. For a detailed account of the *Dorril*'s fight see Arnold Wright, *Annesley of Surat*, pp. 203–6, and S. C. Hill, 'Piracy in Eastern Seas' in *Ind. Antiquary*, XLIX, 1–7.

[27] Biddulph, pp. 32, 46; Barlow, pp. 484–5; Bruce, III, 212.

[28] Biddulph, pp. 50–68; Low, I. 82–6; Hamilton, I. 21; Hannay's *Sea Trader*, pp. 247–50.

He and most of the remaining crew managed to escape inland, where they were well treated by the natives. The story how Macrae subsequently won over the pirates to let him and his crew sail in the *Fancy*, with a part of the *Cassandra's* cargo, and continue the voyage to Bombay, is a stirring one and is believed to have inspired Stevenson with the idea of John Silver, his one-legged pirate in *Treasure Island*.[29]

Probably connected with these prowlers were the five ships, carrying French colours, which in 1686 chased the Company's ship *Caesar* off the coast of Gambia. She was fortunately carrying some European soldiers, and with their help her captain and crew put up a gallant fight lasting five hours and resulting in the pirates being driven off.[30] Another isolated attack in other waters was that made on the Indiaman *President* by two ships and three 'grabs' or galleys, mostly manned by Arabs from Muscat, on 7th March, 1683. She was on her way up from Karwar to Bombay when the grabs grappled with her and one of them boarded. Her commander, Captain Hide (junior), and his crew bravely drove them back, and all three were blown up or sank, whereupon the rest of the squadron withdrew. The *President* was set on fire in sixteen places, and lost eleven men killed and thirty-three wounded.[31] The Arab commander said he had mistaken the Indiaman for a Portuguese ship from Goa, for which he was lying in wait;[32] and, as the Arabs at Muscat had long been at war with the Portuguese, this probably explains the attack.

In the seventeenth century the 'Bombay Marine' was too small a force to do much against Malabar and other pirates

[29] Biddulph, 134–140; S. C. Hill, *Ind. Antiquary*, XLIX, 37–42; Hannay's *Sea Trader*, pp. 261–2; Hamilton, I. 22–3. Macrae became governor of Madras from 1725 to 1730.

[30] Hannay's *Sea Trader*, p. 251; Biddulph, pp. 9–10; S. C. Hill, *Ind. Antiquary*, XLIX, 263–5.

[31] Orme (1) pp. 153–4; Low, I. 71; Biddulph, pp. 72–3. The *President* in December 1683 was cast away off the coast of Cornwall and nearly all the ship's company (including Captain Hide) were drowned: F.R., Letter Books, vol. VII, pp. 264, 281.

[32] F.R., O.C. 4925.

on the west coast of India; and it was not till the governorship of Charles Boone (1715–22) that serious efforts to suppress them began.[33] The fact, however, of their being well armed made Indiamen dangerous foes, and though local pirates caused great havoc with smaller craft belonging to British subjects and others, there seems to be only one recorded instance[34] of an attack on any of the Company's ships until, in 1710, the Angria chief, who was in command of the Mahratta navy, seized the island of Kennery, near Bombay, and engaged in warfare with the English. In the same year his ships fought the Indiaman *Godolphin* close to Bombay for two days, but were finally beaten off. Again, in December 1712, two of his galleys attacked the *Somers* and the *Grantham* off the coast above Goa on their way from England to Bombay. A calm at the time prevented the use of the guns on board, so the Indiamen's boats were hoisted out and an attempt was made to board the pirates. This failed, but the latter found the attack so little to their liking that they made off.[35] In January 1732 the *Ockham* was beset off Dabhul by an Angrian squadron of eight galleys, but good manoeuvring by her commander, Captain William Jobson, enabled her guns to bear on them and keep them away.[36] A contrast to such resistance was the poor defence put up by the *Derby*, when attacked in December 1735 off Suvarnadurg by nine Angrian galleys; her guns were not used effectively, and the crew were discontented at the captain not offering them the usual encouragement to fight by hoisting two treasure chests on deck for distribution to the ship's company, should they make a good resistance. They fought with little spirit, and the captain, overruling those who were willing to continue the fight, insisted on surrender.[37]

[33] Biddulph, pp. 85–102; 120–82; Downing, VI–XXII; Low, I. 128–36.

[34] i.e., that of the *Comfort*, which was boarded by Malabar pirates and seized in November 1638, after a stout defence lasting eight hours. (S. C. Hill, *Ind. Antiquary*, vol. XLVIII, pp. 177–82.).

[35] Biddulph, pp. 76–8, 80–1.

[36] Ibid., pp. 207–9. The *Ockham's* crew were well rewarded, each man getting

(*Continued on p.* 150)

The last recorded engagement, before the Angrians were suppressed by Watson and Clive in 1756, took place in January 1740, when the two ships *Harrington* and *Ceres*, were attacked below Bombay by fifteen sail of Angria's fleet. The brunt of the fight fell on the *Harrington*, which after four hours of heavy firing, drove off four grabs that had engaged her from astern. Later on, disregarding three other grabs that were making for her, she also drove off three grabs from the *Ceres*, and for the next two or three hours engaged the whole six. The Angrias, having had enough of it, finally withdrew and left the Indiamen to continue their voyage. Only one man on board the *Harrington* was wounded, though the ship was much knocked about. Her commander, Captain Thomas Parkinson, was highly commended for his skill and courage; and two years later he was promoted to act as commodore of the Company's Marine at Bombay.[38] The capture of Angria's fort Suvarnadurg by his successor, Commodore William James, in 1755, and that of Gheria in 1756, ended this Angrian danger, but other pirates operated till 1816.[39]

Leaving pirates we come to wars with European powers.

The Company's first enemies in the East were the Portuguese, whose country had been incorporated with Spain in 1580, and who had established an ascendancy on the west coast of India through sea-power.[40] The well-known fights in which the Company's two ships *Red Dragon* and *Hosiander*, under the command of Captain Thomas Best, defeated a Portuguese fleet of four galleons and twenty-six frigates off Surat in November and December

(*Continued from p.* 149)

four months' excess pay. (Downing, p. 66).

[37] Biddulph, pp. 209–11. On the other hand Downing, p. 67, says that the *Derby's* crew stood most gallantly by the ship and Captain, and held out till they were quite overpowered.

[38] Biddulph, pp. 214–6.

[39] Biddulph, pp. 250–1; *Bombay City Gazetteer*, II, 128, 295. See also the picture opp. p. 177 of the Indiaman *Aurora* under attack by pirates in 1812.

[40] Hunter, I. 134, 299.

1612, broke the reputation they had won in India.[41] This victory was repeated in 1614 by the similar one over a large Portuguese armada off Surat by four Company's ships under the stalwart Captain Nicholas Downton;[42] and their defeat off Ormuz in 1622 by a fleet of five Company's ships completed Portuguese discomfiture.[43] Thenceforward the Dutch became the Company's main European enemy[44] until the revolution of 1688 brought William of Orange to the British throne; but the traditional hostility between the two rival East India Companies in India continued, as will be seen (pp. 155–6), up to 1759.

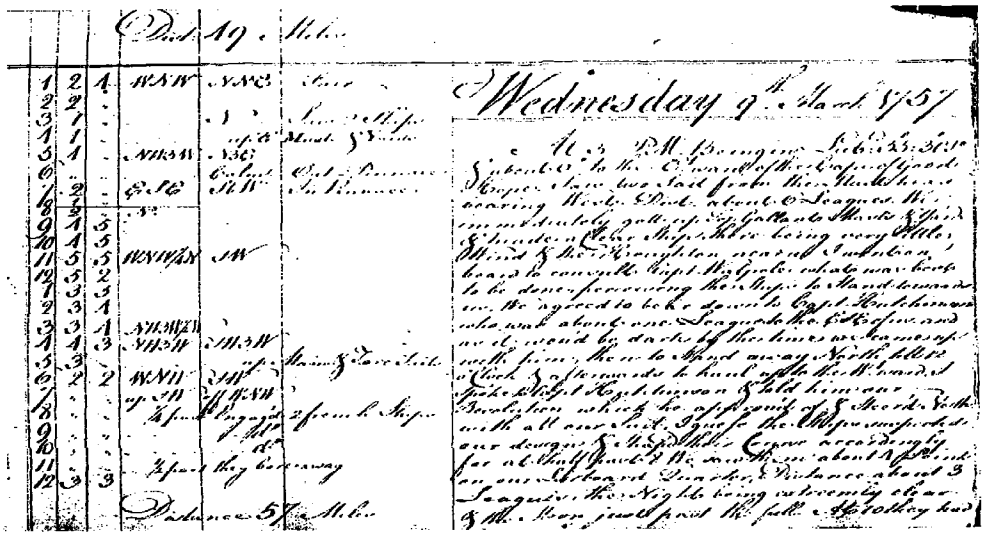
The wars between Britain and Holland in 1652–4, 1655–7, and 1672–4 resulted in only a small loss of ships to the Company. The Dutch men-of-war and privateers could not attack Indiamen in the Channel and Atlantic as easily as the French did in their wars with Britain; and in India the Mughal emperor and other rulers insisted on neutrality in their ports. In the first Dutch war, however, no less than six of the Company's ships were taken or sunk by enemy vessels in the Persian Gulf or elsewhere on voyages from Persia to Surat,[45] In the second Dutch war only one ship appears to have been lost, viz., the *Dorcas*, which was taken by a Flushing privateer at the Scillies on her homeward voyage.[46] The third war was less favourable in this respect. In June 1672, the *Falcon* was captured off the Lizard;[47] while towards the end of that year the *Hannibal* and *Experiment*, on their voyage from the China Sea, fell an easy prey to two Dutch squadrons waiting for them off the coast of Sumatra. The *Hannibal* put up a short fight, resulting in a loss of four killed on the English side and two on the Dutch. The *Experiment*, wholly ignorant of the

[41] Hunter, 300–4; *Voyage of Thomas Best* (Hakluyt edn., 1934), pp. xxvii–xxxi.
[42] Hunter, 1. 319–26. [43] Ibid., 328–31.
[44] Ibid., 332, 357. In 1626 the London Company was forced to give up the contest with the Dutch in the Spice Archipelago, except to a very limited extent. (Ibid. 424–5).
[45] E.F., 1651–4, pp. 161, 164, 175–6, 191.
[46] *Ct. Min.*, 1664–7, XII–III, XX–1; E.F., 1665–7, 261.
[47] *E.F.*, 1. 233; *Ct. Min.*, 1671–3, pp. v, 156.

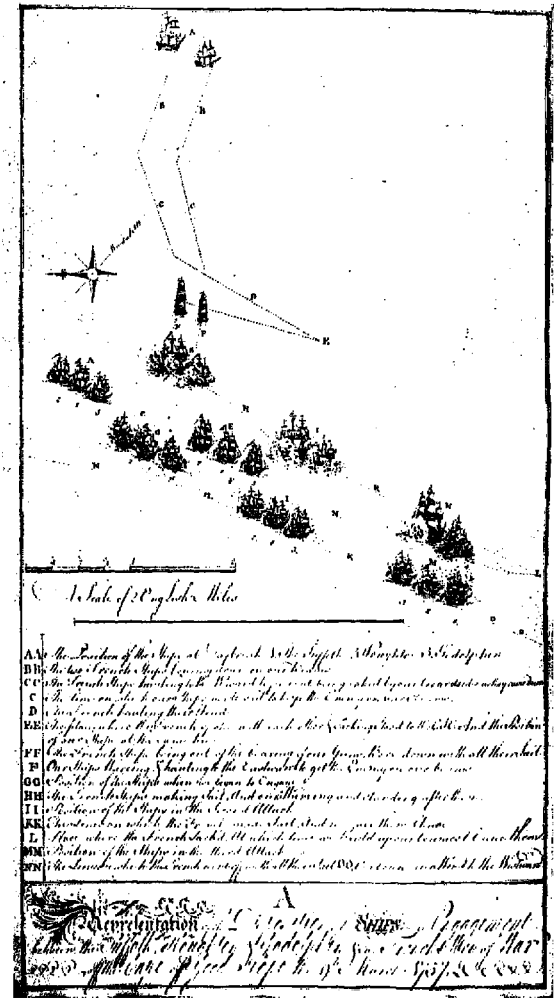
start of war, was outnumbered, and though she cleared for battle, had to surrender.[48]

A fiercer engagement took place on 22nd August 1673 between Dutch and English fleets off Nizampatam on the Coromandel coast. The Dutch had some twenty ships in all, of which at least twelve were men-of-war, and they were coming up the coast in search of the Company's fleet of ten ships, which was on its way from Masulipatam to Madras with valuable cargoes, under Captain William Basse, commander of the *London*. On sighting the Dutch fleet about dawn, he made no attempt to evade it, but signalled to the other commanders to bring their ships into line for defence. As they were strung out, this took some four hours, and even then the *Caesar* lay to leeward, and never came into the line of battle. According to Basse, the Dutch leading ships started the fight about half past ten by firing on the van of the English fleet, comprising the *President* under Captain Jonathan Hide, the *Bombay Merchant* under Captain Erwin, and the *Massingberd* under Captain Westlock. A general engagement followed which lasted until about six in the evening. After an hour or so the *Bombay Merchant*, which had received damage under water and had her hold flooded, and the *Unity* whose commander had less excuse, 'bore away out of the fleet to leeward'; and after about two hours the *Massingberd* and the *East India Merchant* followed them. Five ships, therefore, bore the brunt of the action, viz., *London*, *Ann*, *President*, *Antelope* and *Sampson*. These all fought stoutly until about five o'clock, when on account of loss of men and damage to his ship, and lacking assistance except from the *Ann*, Basse took the *London* out of the action. The *Ann* followed, whereupon the Dutch concentrated on the three remaining ships. The *President* put up a gallant resistance, and surrendered only when Hide had been laid unconscious by a hand-grenade and on recovery found all his men had stopped fighting and the

[48] C. R. Boxer, *Mariner's Mirror*, Oct. 1930, pp. 348, 350; Barlow, I. 224–5; *Ct. Min.*, 1671–3, pp. ix, xxii.



5 From the Log of the *Suffolk*, 9 March 1757 (*see* p. 155).
By courtesy of Commonwealth Relations Office.



6 From the Log of the *Suffolk*, 9 March 1757 (*see* p. 155).
By Courtesy of Commonwealth Relations Office.

Dutch were on board. The *Sampson* was similarly boarded after her commander, Captain Erning, had been slain; also the *Antelope* which had four feet of water in her hold and sank the next day. Most of the Dutch ships were badly damaged, and they made no attempt to pursue the other English vessels, which got safely to Madras on 1st September. The loss of men killed and wounded on both sides was severe.[49]

Such losses of men and ships were, however, trivial, when compared with those suffered by the Company in the wars with France. Hardy's Register shows fourteen ships as taken between 1702 and 1764, and thirty from 1779 to 1810, of which six were retaken. To this should be added those lost in the war of 1689 to 1698, which numbered eight. The *Herbert* was surprised at Johanna in 1690 by a French squadron of six sail, and 'after a most brave defence' blew up, destroying most of the crew. The *Elizabeth* similarly made 'a gallant, though unhappily unsuccessful resistance' to another squadron of three ships that she met in October 1692, within 50 leagues of Bombay. Another small ship, the *Samuel*, was also captured in February of the same year off the Cape of Good Hope, after her commander had fought until his masts were carried by the board; but she was returned for a ransom of £200 after the French had plundered the ship.[50] The *Berkeley Castle* was sunk in the English Channel on her homeward voyage by a French man-of-war early in 1694; and the *Resolution*, *Defence*, *Princess Ann*, and *Success* were taken in 1695 off the coast of Galway by a French fleet.[51]

[49] C. R. Boxer, *Mariner's Mirror*, Oct .1930, pp. 382–8, and the records cited in App., pp. 367–81. Second-hand accounts of the fight will also be found in Fryer, I. 121–3, and in Abbé Carré, II. 662–5. That of the Abbé pays tribute to the courage shown by a young English woman, who 'dressed as a man and sabre in hand, fought as well as the bravest combatant in the ships.'

[50] I.O. List of Mar. R., p. xviii; Barlow, pp. 336–7.

[51] Low, I, 77–8; Hamilton, I. 22; Barlow, pp. 446, 498. In addition the *Seymour* (interloper) was captured with them, as part of the homeward fleet. (Bruce, III. 179). She had been either forcibly taken by the Company or more probably purchased under a scheme of 1693–4 to buy up the stock and shipping of principal interlopers

(*Continued on p. 154*)

When spread over the total period of the wars the losses average, however, only about one ship a year; and the Company escaped suffering a large haul like that met by the Dutch and English merchants trading with the Levant, when a convoy of their ships, numbering about 400, outward bound to Smyrna under weak escort, was intercepted near the straits of Gibraltar by Tourville in June 1693, with the result that some eighty of them were lost and the rest scattered afar.[52] Such a blow at one fell swoop was avoided by their smaller convoys, though they generally were not escorted, except at the worst times to and from St. Helena.

The war with France from 1743 to 1748, followed by the Seven Years War from 1756 to 1763, led to some fierce fighting in India, in which both French and English fleets took part, mostly on the Coromandel coast. The Company's losses in those wars was, however, small. In the first one only three ships are shown in Hardy's Register as 'taken,' of which two were captured at Madras and one off Bombay.[53] And from 1756 to 1763 four are shown as captured, of which only one (the *Walpole*) was taken in Indian waters.[54] In 1758 during the siege of Madras the Indiaman *Shaftesbury* (Captain Nathaniel Inglis) did gallant service in repelling attacks by French ships; and in the following year two Indiamen took part with the English fleet in a hot engagement against M. D'Ache's squadron off Fort St. David.[55]

Two encounters in this period are the subject of pictures One is that between the Indiamen *Suffolk*, *Houghton* and *Godolphin*, commanded by Captain Wilson (already mentioned on p. 110), and two French privateers on 9th March 1757, painted by R. Paton: an engraving from it, published

(*Continued from p.* 153)
(ibid. III. 137, 167–8), so Barlow was justified in including her among the five Company ships captured in 1695 (p. 96 *ante*).

[52] Hervey, II. 453; Macaulay, II. 441–2; *Enc. Brit.* X. 361. According to Macpherson, p. 153, the war with France up to the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 cost the loss of 4,200 British merchantmen.

[53] Orme (2), pp. 87–8, 91.

[54] Mar. R., *Walpole's* log, No. 293 L.

[55] Orme (2), pp. 425–6, 450–1, 512–5; Love, II, 548; I.O. List of Mar. R., p. XVIII.

by P. C. Canot in 1758, is reproduced in vol. v of H. B. Morse's 'East India Company in China.' The exploit is also commemorated in an aquatint by Pocock and Medland which was published by Gold in 1805. The two French ships, one of 64 guns and the other a frigate of 36 guns, attacked the homeward-bound Indiamen off the Cape of Good Hope, with the assurance of victory over trading vessels heavily laden; but the latter formed into line to counter-manoeuvre and fight the enemy. There was a hot exchange of broadsides, causing considerable damage to sails and rigging; and the Indiamen showed such courage and determination in resistance for upwards of three hours, that the two privateers, though their weight of metal gave them a great superiority, broke off the engagement.[56] The Court of Directors highly commended the conduct of the commanders, officers, and crews, and each ship received a gratuity of £2,000.[57] The other picture of the *Pitt* engaging the *St. Louis* on 29 September 1758 off Fort St. David is a fine one in the National Maritime Museum, but the actual conflict scarcely merited that distinction. There was merely one exchange of broadsides. after which the commander of the *Pitt*, finding that water shipped at the ports prevented his working the lower tier of guns, broke away and managed to outsail the *St. Louis*, a vessel superior in size and guns.[58]

One other engagement of this time, but not with the French, deserves mention. In 1759 the Dutch, availing themselves of the bad situation of the English, and though neutral in the Seven Years War, made serious preparations to invade their possessions in Bengal. They embarked over 1,500 men for this purpose in seven well-armed vessels including four of 36 guns each. On 24 November, these

[56] Milburn, 1. p. 1; I.O. List of Mar. R., p. xviii; *Suffolk's* log, No. 397 D. This has a well-drawn 'representation' of the engagement, reproduced between pp. 152–3, and other sketches, charts and decorations, which afford a good illustration of the care and skill often lavished on logs submitted to the Directors.

[57] I.O. List of Mar. R., p. xviii.

[58] *Pitt's* log, No. 525 A. A photograph of the picture appears opp. p. 97.

sailed up the Hugli river, where (to oppose this formidable force) only three Indiamen were available, viz., the *Calcutta* (Captain George Wilson), the *Duke of Dorset* (Captain Forrester), and the *Hardwicke* (Captain Somerset). On their approaching each other, both drew up in line of battle, and an engagement ensued in which the Dutch received such a warm welcome that their commodore struck, and the others followed his example, except one ship that forced her way out, but was intercepted by two other newly arrived Indiamen at Culpee.[59]

Famous fights in the war with France from 1779 are now recorded.]

On 27 July 1800 the *Arniston* (1,200 tons), under the command of Captain Campbell Marjoribanks,[60] had just anchored off Bencoolen on her way to China when she was attacked by a French sloop of war, supposed to be the *Confiance* of twenty-six guns, with the celebrated Surcouf[61] on board. The *Arniston* promptly cut her cables, and gave chase, and fired several broadsides; but the French sloop outsailed her by turning to windward and escaped after a pursuit of several hours.[62]

If she was in reality the *Confiance*, she played a better part on 7 October in the same year when she fell in with the *Kent* of 820 tons, outward bound for Bengal, within a few leagues of Balasore roads. The *Kent* carried a crew of 90 or 100 men, and forty-one passengers, including three women. Of these seven or eight had been taken off the *Queen* (Captain Milliken Craig), which had left Torbay with

[59] Milburn, I. LI; I.O. List of Mar. R., p. XVIII.

[*60] The *Arniston* had already taken part in the battle of Muizenberg, which resulted in the capture of the Cape of Good Hope in 1795. The men volunteered for service, as did those of the *Bombay Castle* (Captain John Hamilton). [Though O. M. Theal, *History of South Africa before* 1795, III, 269–70, does not mention the *Arniston* among the Indiamen in Simon's Bay, and she had on 12 May 1795 quitted the squadron with which she was sent, she arrived on 12 August in time for the battle of Muizenberg (*The Keith Papers*, I, 215, 222). She had been specially sent on from St. Helena with reinforcements (P. Gosse, *St. Helena*, p. 295). Similar captures, in which Indiamen assisted, were those of Pondicherry in 1703 and of the *Isle de France* (Mauritius) in 1810 (I.O. List of Mar. R., pp. XVII, XX).]

[61] Robert Surcouf, the corsair of St. Malo (1773–1827).

[62] I.O. List of Mar. R., p. XX.

the *Kent* on 3 May and had been burnt in the bay of Bahia on 9 July. The Indiamen put up a stiff fight 'with the great guns, supported by musketeers from the poop,' but the Frenchman suddenly ran up alongside and entangled his fore-rigging with her mizzen shrouds, whereupon a boarding party 'jumped by scores from their fore shrouds, fore yard and top, upon the poop and mizzen of the *Kent*' and captured her. 'Surcouf, who was in the dress of a seaman that he might not be distinguished, was one of the first that boarded.' The commander of the *Kent*, Captain Robert Rivington, was killed in the action, and twenty-one others, among whom were five passengers including William Cator, 'a man of large independent fortune who, late in life having lost a material proportion thereof,'[63] was returning to Calcutta with his wife and daughter, and Thomas Henry Graham, a young writer who was coming out to take up his appointment. Thirty-four were wounded.

Hickey gives a vivid account of the fight,[64] which lasted at least an hour and a half, and pays tribute to the chivalrous conduct of the victor. 'Surcouf sent the whole of the surviving passengers, together with the wounded men, under the care of the surgeon of the *Kent*, to Bengal in a country merchantman which he captured while conducting his prize to the Isle of France, about fourteen days after taking the *Kent*. He had behaved with the tenderest humanity to the wounded and with the utmost liberality to the British prisoners in general, especially the ladies whom he treated with every possible degree of respect and generosity.'

Less creditable, from the British point of view, was an earlier incident, when the *Triton*, outward bound, 'with full two hundred stout fellows belonging to her,' was surprised

[63] Hickey, III. 155.

[*64] Memoirs, IV. 239–41, 243. [For a full account of the capture of the *Kent*, see C. N. Norman, *The Corsairs of France*, pp. 352–5, and for brief ones James, III. 31, and Hannay, *Ships and Men*, p. 139. David Scott, the Chairman of the Company in a letter of 29 June 1801 to General Dugald Campbell at Madras (which Professor Philips has brought to my notice) severely criticises the conduct of the *Kent*'s crew in surrendering to the boarding-party without a fight.]

on 29 January 1796 off the Sandheads by Surcouf and eighteen other Frenchmen, who were cruising about in a schooner that they had seized. Under pretence of bringing a pilot, they boarded the Indiaman and captured her almost without resistance, after killing the commander, Captain Philip Burnycot, and two others in the cuddy. The male passengers were placed in the schooner, and orders given to take them to Calcutta. The ship's officers with twenty-five sailors and the ladies were kept on board the *Triton*, which made sail for the Mauritius; and Hickey again records that Surcouf 'behaved with the most polite and respectful attention' to the ladies.[65]

The *Triton* was subsequently retaken and brought to Madras; and the sequel is told in one of the letters written to Lord Macartney by Andrew Barnard, the Colonial Secretary at the Cape.[66] Early in April 1799 she arrived at Simon's Bay from Madras and Pondicherry, 'an old shattered vessel,' with six hundred French prisoners on board. 'The condition we found her in was beyond all power of our describing.' Two hundred were on the doctor's list; upwards of forty had died on the voyage, and there had been nine more deaths during the two days since her arrival. As small-pox had broken out on board, leave was refused to land the sick; whereupon 'they became desperate and threatened to burn the ship or run her ashore.' Barnard sent for two of the men, and learned that over five hundred French prisoners had been put on board out of the prison at Madras where they had been confined for five years. Over fifty of the inhabitants of Pondicherry had also been ordered to embark at twenty-four hours' notice. In a description of the incident which Lady Anne Barnard wrote to Henry Dundas on 14 May 1799[67] she says they

*[65] Memoirs, iv. 223–5; but Hickey wrongly puts the capture in 1799. [Another account is given in *The Corsairs of France*, pp. 334–7.]

*[66] *Lady Anne Barnard at the Cape*; 1799–1802: pp. 117–118.

*[67] *South Africa a Century Ago*: Lady Anne Barnard's Letters from the Cape to Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville: (Maskew Miller, Cape Town), p. 38 [and ed. W. H. Wilkins, London, 1901, p. 215].

'were lately seized at Pondicherry on suspicion, fully founded, of carrying on machinations against our interests with their countrymen and with Tippoo: of these there are opulent and creditable men of good manners.' They were crowded into one half of the great cabin, and the remainder were stowed below. To add to their troubles, they were half famished and in want of the commonest comforts. According to Barnard, their provisions had been totally ruined by the surf at Madras; according to his wife, 'it appeared as though the agent employed to provide for them had not done his employer justice.' Orders were eventually given to land the sick and to clean the ship. As to those who had to remain on board, 'I wish,' says Lady Anne, 'there were the means of affording some vessel to take away the half of them: but I hear that there is at present not one ship on this coast, all being cruising out.'

Surcouf's younger brother, Nicholas, was captured in the *Adèle* by Captain Walter of H.M.S. *Albatross* off the Sandheads on 13 November 1800, and brought to Calcutta.[68] A week later, on November 21, the *Phoenix* Indiaman of 800 tons (Captain William Moffat) arrived in the Hugli. She had covered herself with glory by accounting for another French privateer, the *Général Malartic*. On her way to Bombay she fell in with a suspicious craft in the upper reaches of the Bay of Bengal, and immediately cleared for action. As she approached within pistol shot, the Frenchman manned his rigging and prepared to board. The *Phoenix*, however, lost no time in pouring in a broadside, whereupon the privateer struck her flag. Such importance was attached to the capture that Captain Moffat was publicly presented with a sword of honour.[69] The *Général Malartic*, which carried sixteen guns (two of them 36-pounders) and 120 men, had been causing a sort of blockade in the Bay. She had captured two Indiamen, the *Raymond* (Captain Henry Smedley) and the *Woodcot* (Captain

[68] cf. Norman, *Corsairs*, p. 350.

[69] Eastwick, p. 127; Mar. R., log of the *Phoenix*, No. 175G.

Andrew Hannay) in Tellicherry roads on 20 April 1798,[70] and had followed this up by taking at least a dozen country ships.

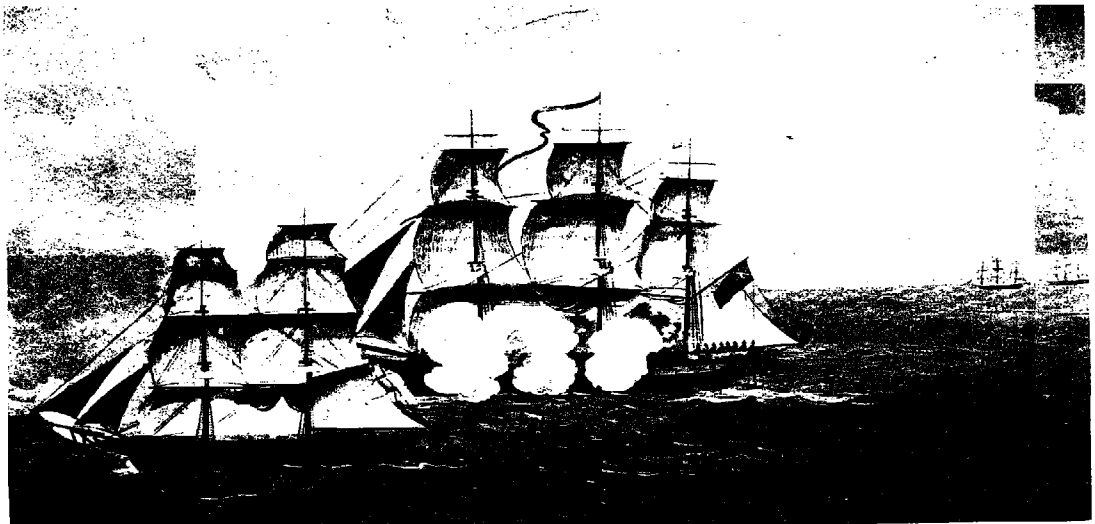
The *Exeter* of 1,200 tons (Captain Henry Meriton), which sailed from Torbay on 27 May 1800, with the *Phoenix* and eight other Indiamen under the escort of H.M.S. *Belliqueux* (Captain Bulteel), had also distinguished herself on the outward voyage. Three French frigates being sighted, the *Belliqueux* engaged and captured one of them, *La Concorde* of 44 guns and 444 men, while the *Exeter* and the *Bombay Castle* of 1,200 tons (Captain John Hamilton) gave chase to another, which proved to be *La Medée* of 36 guns and 350 men. At midnight the *Exeter* found herself coming up rapidly with the enemy, while her consort was far astern. Captain Meriton ran alongside the Frenchman with all his ports up, and called upon him to surrender. The captain of *La Medée*, supposing himself to be under the guns of a ship-of-war instantly complied; and an officer was sent to bring him on to the quarterdeck of the Indiaman, where he delivered his sword to Captain Meriton. The *Bombay Castle* was still at a distance but on her coming up the prisoners were divided. By this time the French commander was recovering from his surprise and, looking attentively at the little guns on the quarter-deck, enquired of Captain Meriton what ship it was to which he had surrendered Captain Meriton drily answered 'To a merchantman'; whereupon the indignant Frenchman begged to be allowed to return with his people to the frigate and fight the battle again! The prizes were taken to Rio de Janeiro, and the Indiamen continued their voyage.[71] In 1810, Captain Meriton was to figure in another gallant sea-fight, which ended less happily for him. At daybreak on 3 July, and

[70] Chatterton, p. 169, also makes this statement, doubtless on authority of Eastwick, p. 126; but according to Hardy, p. 186, and the naval historian James, II. 244, the *Raymond* and the *Woodcot* were captured by the frigate *Prenseure*. So, unless this is a case of confusion caused by the French practice of changing the names of ships, as mentioned by James, I, 425, Eastwick's memory must have erred.

[71] cf. James, III. 22–3.



7 Explosion aboard the *Duke of Atholl*, 18 April 1783 (*see* p. 135).
From the painting by James Gillray, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.



8 The *Venus* in action, August 1804 (*see* p. 173).
By Courtesy of Commonwealth Relations Office.

when about thirty-six miles off the island of Mayotta in the Mozambique channel, three Indiamen outward bound to Bengal — the *Ceylon* of 818 tons (Captain Henry Meriton), the *Astell* of 820 tons (Captain Robert Hay) and the *Windham* of 820 tons (Captain John Stewart) — sighted the French frigates *Bellone* and *Minerve* and the corvette *Victor*. Meriton, who was commodore, hoisted the private signal and, receiving no reply, ordered his ships to close for action. A line abreast was formed; but the *Astell* fell astern. The *Victor* poured a broadside into the *Ceylon*, and the engagement became general. The captain of the *Astell* was severely wounded and the chief officer, William Hawkey, took command. At four o'clock in the afternoon the *Minerve* bore down on the *Windham*, and inflicted serious damage to her sails and rigging. At six o'clock Captain Meriton and his chief officer, Thomas Aldham, were wounded in succession, and second officer Tristram Fanning took charge. An hour later all the guns on the *Ceylon's* upper deck and five on the lower had been disabled, and her hull was badly holed. She came out of the firing line and hauled down her colours. The *Astell* thereupon put out her lights, crowded on sail, and made her escape. The *Windham* continued the action, but nine of her guns had been silenced, and she was obliged to surrender. There were about 250 troops on each Indiaman, 100 Lascars and from twelve to twenty British seamen. An incessant musketry-fire had been kept up, but the contest was too unequal.[72]

The Directors were so overjoyed at the escape of the *Astell*, which reached her home moorings on 28 August 1811, that they awarded a pension of £460 to her commander and distributed the sum of £2,000 among her officers and crew. But the reward which must have made the most appeal came from the Admiralty, which granted the ship's company protection from impressment for three years. Each of the other two captains received £500,

[72] cf. James, v. 132–5; Chatterton, pp. 288–95.

and suitable rewards were made to the officers and men.[73]

It may appear strange that a ship which had left her consorts in the lurch should have been singled out in this manner for a mark of appreciation. But the Company never failed to impress upon its captains that their first duty was to save the cargo and bring the ship safely to port. 'According to the Company's law,' writes one of their officers, 'having been captured by an enemy or the ship in any way wrecked or destroyed, the captain, officers and crew forfeit their pay and wages.[74] Those, therefore, who had fought to the end on board the *Ceylon* and the *Windham* had good reason to consider themselves as well treated. Both vessels were recaptured, and returned to their moorings in the Thames on 11 August 1811.

The name of *Warren Hastings* is inseparably associated with one of the most famous of these sea-fights. There were three Indiamen of that name, all belonging to the Larkins family. The first, which was of 755 tons, was afloat from 1782 to 1797. The second of 1,200 tons set out on her maiden voyage to China on 6 April 1803, with Captain Thomas Larkins, junior, in command, and returned safely in August 1804. On 17 February 1805, she sailed again from Portsmouth for St. Helena, Bencoolen and China; and it was on her homeward voyage (21 June 1806) that she immortalised herself by her encounter with the French fifty-gun frigate *La Piémontaise*. Captain Thomas Larkins, who was still in command, was the nephew of the owner, John Pascall Larkins, and son of Thomas Larkins, who were both old 'Company's captains,' and had been schoolfellows of William Hickey at Mrs. Keighley's academy at Streatham.[75] On her outward voyage, the *Warren Hastings*

[73] cf. Brenton, IV. 463; James, V. 136.

*[74] Journal of Thomas Addison edited by Sir John Laughton [in the *Naval Miscellany*, I. 365], for the Naval Records Society: quoted by Chatterton, p. 207. Addison was a midshipman in the *Marquis Wellesley* (Coast and Bay, 1802, 1803) and afterwards in the *Brunswick* when she was captured off Point de Galle on 11 July 1805. He was subsequently fifth and fourth officer in the *Marquis Wellesley* (1806–10). [As to this forfeiture of wages, cf. pp. 82–3 *ante*].

[75] cf. Hickey, III. 377.

carried, in addition to the 138 men and boys which she had on board at the time of the action with *La Piémontaise*, eighteen British seamen and forty Chinamen; but the latter had been left at Canton and the former had been 'pressed' by a British man-of-war. The *Piémontaise* had a crew of 385, and her broadside guns numbered twenty-three as against the Indiaman's eighteen; and the latter for want of hands was able only to man eight out of the eleven guns on her lower deck battery. Notwithstanding this disparity, the action was stubbornly fought for four hours; and the *Warren Hastings* did not surrender until every gun on her upper deck had been disabled and the lower deck was on fire and her rudder useless. Seven of her crew, including the purser, John Edwick, were killed; and thirteen were wounded, among them being the chief officer James Coxwell, the third officer Edward Davies, the sixth officer and the surgeon's mate. After the surrender Captain Larkins was badly wounded and treated with great brutality; and John Wood the second officer, John Barnes the surgeon, James Boyton a midshipman, and the boatswain's mate, were also injured. It transpired subsequently that Morgan, the first lieutenant of the *Piémontaise*, who led the boarding party and was responsible for these outrages, was intoxicated at the time.[76] The *Warren Hastings* was subsequently retaken by some British cruisers and brought to Calcutta. She was used for the 'country trade' and the Larkins family built another *Warren Hastings*, the third of her name. She was an Indiaman of 1,000 tons, and Thomas Larkins took her for her maiden voyage to Bengal and China, sailing from Portsmouth on 24 February 1809, and returning to the Thames on 1 August 1810. As the ship reached Saugor,

*[76] [For other accounts of the action see James, IV. 149–54; Chatterton, pp. 277–84; Hannay, *Ships and Men*, pp. 139–40.] A set of four paintings of the engagement by T. Whitcombe were exhibited at the Earls Court Exhibition in 1895 by Mr. Walter F. Larkins, a descendant of Captain Thomas Larkins. Two of the engravings by J. Jeakes, representing the beginning and the close of the action, were in the Victoria Memorial collection at Calcutta. [A similar representation, taken from aquatints by the Marine painter Robert Dodd in the National Maritime Museum, appears in the illustrations opp. p. 176.]

Larkins descried the old *Warren Hastings* at anchor and hailed her, whereupon 'the shouting on both sides was quite deafening.'[77]

Meanwhile, the *Piémontaise* had continued her predatory career by intercepting the *Fame* of 492 tons (Captain James Jameson), when bound for Bengal, on 24 September 1806, but met her fate on 8 March 1808, off Cape Comorin at the hands of His Majesty's ship *San Fiorenzo* of 36 guns. Although superior both in armament and men, she was forced to strike her flag after a three days' battle, and the *San Fiorenzo* towed her into Colombo. But her own flag was flying at half mast, for her gallant young Captain, George Nicholas Hardinge, was killed in the action.[78] He was only twenty-five years old, and nephew of Sir Richard Hardinge, a well-known 'ship's husband' and commander in his day of an Indiaman.[79] A monument by Bacon was erected to his memory in St. Paul's Cathedral by order of Parliament: and another of larger dimensions was placed in St. Thomas' Cathedral, Bombay, by the merchants of that city, who presented his father, the Rev. Henry Hardinge, with a vase worth 300 guineas and his first lieutenant, William Dawson, with a sword worth 100 guineas. Dawson was given the command of the *Piémontaise*, which was drafted into the British Navy, but died at Madras on 29 September 1811, at the age of twenty-eight.[80]

*[77] Memoirs of John Shipp, p. 142.

[78] cf. James, III. 308–11; Hickey, IV. 428–9.

*[79] Richard Hardinge (1756–1826) was sworn in on 26 October 1785 as commander of the *Kent* of 755 tons. He had then been at sea since 1776, and commanded the *Kent* for four voyages, from December 1785 until 30 August 1794. In 1801 he was created a baronet, and the title went at his death in 1826 to his eldest nephew, Charles Hardinge. The third nephew, Henry, was the first Viscount Hardinge of Lahore, and grandfather of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst.

*[80] The famous tobacco box, which is the property of the Westminster Post Overseers' Society, is decorated with numerous silver plates which form an epitome of the history of England during the past two hundred years. One of these is inscribed: 'This plate represents the memorable engagement between His Majesty's ship *St. Fiorenzo* of 36 guns and the French frigate *La Piemontaise* of 50 guns on the 6th, 7th and 8th March 1808, when after a desperate battle of three days and three nights, she was captured by His Majesty's ship with the loss of 160 men killed and wounded, the *St. Fiorenzo* had only thirty-eight killed and wounded.—Wm.

(*Continued on p.* 165)

Equally gallant, but less famous, was the resistance offered by the *Lord Nelson* of 814 tons (Captain Robert Spottiswoode), which was attacked off Cape Clear on the southern coast of Ireland, on 14 August 1803, when on her way home from Bengal, by the *Bellone*, a French privateer of 28 guns. The Indiaman fought bravely for an hour and a half. The passengers joined valiantly with the crew, and the ship did not surrender until the mizen-mast had gone overboard and she was completely disabled.[81] The commander, his brother Dr. William Spottiswoode 'who had been in the medical line in Bengal and was returning with a handsome fortune,' and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Murray[*82] were killed in the engagement, as well as the fourth officer, one seaman, and two other passengers. The chief officer (Robert Ramage), the second officer (James Masson), two midshipmen, five passengers and eighteen petty officers and seamen were wounded. Among the ladies on board was Miss Mary Lloyd, the niece of Sir Henry Russell's wife, who, says Hickey, 'conducted herself like a perfect heroine.'[83] The *Bellone* with her prize proceeded towards Corunna and was chased by Captain Burke in H.M. brig *Seagull*, which sighted her on 25 August. After an engagement that lasted from five o'clock in the afternoon till half past eight, H.M.S. *Colossus* of seventy-four guns came up, and the *Lord Nelson* was recaptured.

Another gallant exploit at sea is linked with the name of the *General Goddard*, an Indiaman of 799 tons. She

(*Continued from p. 164*)

Glasier, John Cooper, Wm. Burridge, overseers, 1808, St. Mary's and St. John's Westminster.' A picture of the battle occupies the centre of the plate, which was reproduced in *English Life* for October, 1926 (vol. VII, No. 5).

[81] cf. James, III. 191.

[*82] Peter Murray is mentioned in Thomas Twining's *Travels*, p. 91, as 'an agreeable gentlemanly man, Adjutant General of the Company's troops, and brother of Sir John Murray, one of my best Calcutta friends'. Twining met him in 1794 when he was travelling up-country by water with Sir Robert Abercromby, the Commander-in-Chief. Sir John Murray (1745–1822) was military auditor-general in Bengal. He was chief of the proscribed clan Gregor and resumed the surname of Macgregor after he received a baronetcy in 1795. His son, Sir Evan Macgregor (1785–1841), the second baronet, who was born in Calcutta, was Governor of the Windward Isles.

[*83] Memoirs, IV. 271.

sailed from Portsmouth for the Coast and Bay on 2 May 1794, under the command of Captain William Taylor Money. When on his way home, in the night of 14 June 1795, he sighted a fleet of twenty-one Dutch Indiamen off St. Helena, and ran into the middle of them. They fired, but he did not reply and kept close to them until daybreak, when H.M.S. *Sceptre* came up. Seven ships surrendered and were taken into St. Helena.[84]

The capture of the *Osterley* of 775 tons (Captain John Piercy) by the French frigate *La Forte* in 1799, when on her way out to Madras, was the prelude to a memorable engagement. The *Forte* was at the time one of the largest and most heavily-armed frigates afloat, and carried 50 guns. She had been playing havoc with the British shipping in the bay of Bengal and had, besides the *Osterley*, captured seven other ships when she was sighted on the night of 28 February 1799, off the Sandheads by the English frigate *La Sybille* of 44 guns. A graphic account of the fight is given by Captain R. W. Eastwick,[85] whose ship had been one of those captured and who was a prisoner on board the *Forte*.

The French fought to the bitter end, losing Admiral de Sercey, a pupil of the redoubtable Bailli de Suffren, the captain (Beaulieu), all three lieutenants, and fifty-five others killed and eighty-five wounded out of a crew of 300. Finally, the senior surviving officer, a mere lad, begged Eastwick to hail the British ship and report that the Frenchman had struck. The engagement had gone on all night, from nine o'clock until half-past two in the morning, and the *Forte* was now a dismantled hulk. On the *Sybille* there were only fifteen casualties, the fire from the *Forte* having gone clear over the heads of her crew and never

[84] cf. P. Gosse, *St. Helena*, pp. 220–4, where the full story is related, and a painting by Thomas Luny of the *General Goddard* attacking the Dutch fleet is reproduced. The Dutch had come into the war as unwilling allies of the French, who had overrun Holland in the winter of 1794–5.

[85] *A Master Mariner*, pp. 138–46. Eastwick lost his ship, but the *Osterley* was recaptured and returned to her moorings in the Thames on 3 June 1800, having sailed from Portsmouth exactly two years before.

been properly brought to bear on her deck. But among the killed were the commander, Captain Edward Cooke, and Captain Davis of the Scottish Brigade, aide-de-camp to Lord Mornington, who was serving on board as a volunteer.[86] The body of Cooke, who was only twenty-six years of age, was brought to Calcutta and buried in the South Park-street cemetery, where his tomb may still be seen. The East India Company erected a monument in St. John's Chapel in Westminster Abbey to commemorate 'an event not more splendid in its achievement than important in its results to the British trade in India.' It is the work of James Bacon, junior, and is placed near the monuments of Sir John Franklin and General Wolfe. One of the bas-reliefs represents the *Forte* and the *Sybille* in close action, and in another Cooke is seen wounded and supported by a sailor. An aquatint of the battle has been acquired for the collection at the Victoria Memorial Hall. The *Forte* was added to the British Navy as a 44-gun frigate and placed under the command of Captain Lucius Hardyman, the first lieutenant of the *Sybille*, who carried on the fight after Captain Cooke was fatally wounded. She was wrecked in June 1801, when entering the harbour of Jeddah in the Red Sea.

Admiral de Sercey had already in 1797 come off second-best in an encounter with Indiamen.

On 28 January a fleet of China ships — the *Woodford* (Captain Charles Lennox, commodore), the *Ocean* (Captain Andrew Patton), the *Taunton Castle* (Captain Edward Studd), the *Canton* (Captain Abel Vyvyan) and the *Boddam* (Captain George Palmer) — were surprised off the eastern extremity of Java by a French squadron of six frigates. The Indiamen were carrying valuable cargoes of specie and merchandise, and the commodore realised that 'to run would betray the nature of his force.' He therefore hoisted

[86] [cf. James, II. 365–75.] The *Sybille* had a company of the King's Scottish Brigade on board as marines. [The Earl of Mornington is better known as Lord Wellesley, which is the name I give him in the text and notes; but he did not get this Irish Marquisate till December 1799].

the flag of Rear-Admiral Peter Rainier, who was then commanding in the East Indies, and directing his ships to show the white ensign, sent two of them to reconnoitre. The French squadron at once made sail, and the Indiamen continued their voyage. So complete was the success of the ruse that de Sercey, who was in command of the enemy, reported to the French governor on his arrival at the Mauritius that he had been chased by Admiral Rainier with five sail of the line.[87]

Captain Charles Mitchell of the *William Pitt* was another of the 'Company's captains,' whose exploits against the French brought him a knighthood. In 1793 the French privateers were causing great damage to shipping in the Indian seas; and so great was the loss sustained that the Bengal Government fitted out four Indiamen as ships-of-war: the *William Pitt* of 798 tons (Captain Charles Mitchell), the *Britannia*, a Company's ship of 770 tons (Captain Thomas Cheap), the *Houghton* of 778 tons (Captain Robert Hudson) and the *Pigot* of 765 tons (Captain George Ballantyne) — together with a private ship, the *Nonsuch* (Captain Canning).[88] This little fleet sailed under the command of Captain Mitchell as commodore. The major share of adventure fell to the *Pigot*. On 17 January 1794, she was lying in Rat Island basin near Bencoolen and refitting, when she was attacked by two French privateers. As the entrance to the basin was too narrow to permit of joint action, the privateers relieved each other. The *Pigot* was no match for either, for although she had 32 guns her crew numbered only 102, while the *Vengeur* mounted 32 guns and carried 350 men, and the *Résolue* 28 guns and 160 men. But she

*87 [cf. James, II. 89–90]. The *Canton* lost her captain, Abel Vyvyan, at Whampoa in September 1797; and the *Ocean* was wrecked on the island of Kalao Tua four days after the engagement with de Sercey (1 February 1797). She was replaced by another *Ocean* of 1200 tons, which sailed on her maiden voyage to Canton in January 1801 and nine years later was also lost in the China seas. She 'parted company' from H.M.S. *Modeste* off Pulo Sapata on 5 September 1810, and had been 'not since heard of.' It was her fifth voyage.

*88 The *Nonsuch* was a Calcutta-built ship and was the second launched from Colonel Watson's dockyard (Hickey, II. 152). She was employed in the China trade.

put up so stubborn a fight that after nearly two hours both her assailants sheered off and anchored about two miles away to repair damages. The *Pigot* was likewise in bad case, and was still making good at Rat Island, when she was surprised and captured on 11 March by two French ships, one of which was the *Princess Royal* Indiaman, which had been taken 29 September 1793 on her way to China, and rechristened the *Duguay Trouin*.[89] They had escaped from the remainder of Commodore Mitchell's squadron, which had engaged them on 24 January. Two days earlier Mitchell had sighted the *Vengeur* and the *Résolue* off North Island, and compelled them to surrender after forty minutes' chase.[90]

The island of St. Jago, off Cape Verde, was the scene of a much discussed engagement in 1781 between the Bailli de Suffren and Commodore Johnston, in the course of which two Indiamen, the *Hinchinbrooke* (Captain Arthur Maxwell) and the *Essex* (Captain Arthur Morris) were roughly handled. Johnston was appointed to command a small expedition against the Cape of Good Hope (which was in the hands of the Dutch) and to convoy a fleet of thirteen Indiamen, each carrying twenty-six guns and transporting between them about 3,000 English troops. He sailed from Spithead on 13 March, and arriving in the latitude of Cape Verde, put into Porto Praya on the island of St. Jago for water. On 16 April, a French squadron, which was also conveying troops to the Cape, hove in sight. Suffren had, like Johnston, come in to fill his water casks but, perceiving the English ships were crowded together, resolved to attack. The *Essex* and the *Hinchinbrooke* were captured, and the French then engaged the *Hero* and the *Monmouth*, the largest of the ships-of-war; but they withdrew after an hour's action, leaving their prizes behind. Johnston made a half-hearted effort at pursuit but returned to Porto Praya,

[89] After the famous corsair of St. Malo (1673–1736), for whose exploits see Norman, pp. 155–239, and Hannay, *Ships and Men*, pp. 144–63.

[90] cf. James, I. 218, 219, 221.

where he remained another fortnight. Suffren, who had lost two of his captains in the engagement, went on to the Cape, where he landed his troops; and when Johnston arrived on 2 July, he was obliged to content himself with seizing two Dutch Indiamen which were lying at anchor in Saldanha Bay. His conduct gave rise to serious criticism, of which Hickey makes mention.[91]

In 1782 the *Chapman*, Captain Thomas Walker, was lying in Negapatam roads, when the French hospital ship, the *Duke of Tuscany*, was seen in the offing. The Indiaman hoisted Dutch colours and, having thus lured her into the roads, captured her. In addition to eighteen French surgeons, three priests and fifty other Frenchmen, there were on board some sixty English prisoners, who had been taken in H.M.S. *Hannibal*, a fifty-gun ship captured by Suffren off the Cape on his way out to India in 1781. The remainder of the *Hannibal's* crew were handed over to Hyder Ali by Suffren.[92] A correspondent writes in the *India Gazette* of September 21, 1782: 'Sixty two officers from the *Hannibal*, *Chaser*, *Fortitude*, *Yarmouth* and country ships are confined at Chillambrum (Chidambaram, near Porto Novo) in a place scarcely large enough to accommodate a tenth part of the number.'

[In 1804 took place the curious encounter between a fleet of sixteen Indiamen on its way home from Canton, under Commodore Nathaniel Dance, and a French squadron of four warships under Admiral Linois.[93] On the 14th February, when the fleet was off Pulo Aor in the

*[91] *Memoirs*, II. 378–379. Suffren's own story is told by Hickey in a later volume (III. 56–7). There is also an account of the action in Colonel H. H. Pearse's *Life of Sir Eyre Coote*, p. 312.

[92] For Suffren's excuse, see Hickey, III. 59–61.

[93] Sir Evan Cotton has omitted to give an account of the action in this chapter, perhaps because it cannot properly be described as a 'famous fight,' and also because it has been fully dealt with in other publications, e.g., James, III, 249–54; Brenton, III, 337–40; Chatterton, pp. 184–9; Hannay, *Ships and Men*, pp. 140–3. It is clear, however, from references to it at pp. 128, 138, 177 and a draft dealing with it that was among his papers, that he intended the work should cover it. A short summary of the encounter, mainly based on the account of it given by James, is accordingly incorporated here, with additions from the aforementioned draft.

Straits of Malacca, four strange sail were sighted, which a reconnaissance showed to be French. They were in fact Admiral Linois's flagship, the *Marengo* (74 guns), the frigates *Belle Foule* (40) and *Semillante* (36), and a brig, the *Berceau* (24), which had sailed together from Batavia to intercept the China fleet. On Dance's signals the English ships formed line of battle in close order, continuing their course under easy sail, but were not attacked that day. They lay-to all night, and at daybreak found the French squadron was some three miles to windward, also lying-to. Both parties hoisted their colours, those of the principal Indiamen showing the blue ensign, and the remainder the red. This led Linois to believe that the fleet was under convoy. At nine in the morning the English formed in order of sailing, and continued their course, whereupon the French ships came nearer. About one o'clock hostilities commenced. The *Royal George* was the leading Indiaman, and the *Ganges* and the *Earl Camden* (Dance's flag-ship) came next in order. The French formed in very close line and opened fire. The *Royal George* replied; and the other two followed as soon as their guns could take effect. The *Warley* and the *Alfred* also came into action for about fifteen minutes; but before any of the other Indiamen could do so, the *Marengo* and her consorts hauled their wind and stood away to the eastward under all sail. Dance made the signal for a general chase which lasted for three hours; it was then abandoned and the course laid for the Straits of Malacca, where at eight o'clock the fleet anchored for the night. The only British casualties were one man killed and one wounded on the *Royal George*; and according to Linois his ships suffered no loss, as the fire of the Indiamen engaged was chiefly directed at the rigging.

The sudden breaking-off of the engagement is explained by a French writer, the Comte de Dumas, as due to Linois being deceived by the warlike appearance of the Indiamen and the blue swallow-tail flags hoisted by the three largest ships. Few of them carried a crew of more than 100 men

and their heaviest guns were 18-pounders. The *Marengo* had at least 700 men on board, and had a weight of metal on the lower deck which gave her a superiority over all the Indiamen that could at one time have brought their guns to bear on her. The two frigates were likewise very powerful ships.[94] It was mainly the brave co-operation of all the ships in following Dance's orders, and the firm front they showed in readiness to attack or defend themselves that made Linois think they must have some naval escort to warrant this;[95] and Hickey (IV. 297) sums up the action as one in which a formidable French squadron of heavy ships were 'compelled to abandon their object and to fly before a parcel of half-manned merchantmen.'

The Company had good reason to congratulate itself that Linois neglected the opportunity of 'destroying an Indiaman or two before he surrendered.'[96] The fleet of China ships was valued at six millions, and the revenue on the tea that they carried amounted to upward of three millions sterling. The gratitude of the Company and the Government was profound. Dance was knighted and awarded a pension of £500 a year by the Directors, as well as a present of 2,000 guineas and a piece of plate valued at 200 guineas. The Bombay Insurance voted him £5,000 in addition, and the Committee of the Patriotic Fund (meeting at Lloyds' Coffee House on 11 August 1803) presented him with a sword and a silver vase, each of the value of £100. To Captain Timins of the *Royal George*, who led the action and placed his ship alongside the *Marengo*, the Directors presented 1,000 guineas and a piece of plate worth 100 guineas; and from the Patriotic Fund he received a silver vase and a sword together worth £150. The other captains[97] were rewarded with 500 guineas and pieces of plate

[94] Brenton, III. 340, 342; James, III. 253. [95] cf. James's summing-up at p. 253.

[*96] cf. a conversation on the subject with Sir Nathaniel Dance, recorded in the Farington Diary of 7 August 1806. [Linois and his squadron surrendered to Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren on 13 March 1806].

[97] It is unnecessary to name the thirteen others who took no part in the actual firing: they are all given by Brenton and James; and some, such as the *Exeter* and the *Warren Hastings*, are mentioned elsewhere in these pages.

by the Company, and with swords by the Patriotic Fund: while the subordinate officers and crews also shared in monetary grants.[98]

The picture facing p. 161, and showing the capture of the French ship *Venus* in August 1804, was formerly in the India Office. The extra ship *Union* was nearing the completion of her voyage from Bengal, in company with the *Sir William Pulteney* and the *Eliza Ann*, when she sighted a brig, which at first pretended to be an English ship, but when tackled, hoisted French colours. A sharp action lasting for about twenty minutes ensued, in which the stranger received damage that made him strike.[99] It was a tame affair, but the reproduction of the scene has value, not only for the picture of the two ships but also for the unusual feature of its showing the sharp-shooters in the tops of the Indiaman.]

[98] cf. Brenton, III, 345; James, III, 254.
[99] Mar. R., logs Nos. 177 E (1), 190 A, 290 H.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Captains Ashore

It remains to attempt some description of the more notable 'Company's captains.' They were drawn from every rank. Some were rough seamen of the type of Hickey's friend 'blackguard Sam' Rogers of the *Plassey* (p. 27), and spent the greater part of their lives at sea. Others retired early, and added to the fortunes they all acquired by 'private trade' as ship's husbands, or sought election to the Court of Directors. They were not inferior as navigators, but the service of the Company was merely the means to an end.

Non cuivis adire Corinthum. Fortune did not smile equally upon those who courted her favours upon the high seas. It was the fate of some to ensure year after year the buffetings round the Cape of Storms and to employ all their ingenuity in outwitting the French privateers. Five at least, whose careers we have traced, made nine voyages or more. The record of thirteen voyages is held by Henry Meriton, whose name first appears in Hardy's Register as third officer of the *Pigot* in 1783–85. He then shipped as second officer of the *Halsewell* and, escaping the wreck on the Shambles in January 1786, transferred as first officer to the *Bridgwater*, which sailed for China on 14 April 1786. From 1788 to 1792 he was first officer of the *Albion* for two voyages to the Coromandel coast and China; and he made three more to China (1793–99) as first officer of the *Exeter*. He was sworn in as commander of the *Exeter* on 9 October 1799, and took her four times to China (1800 to 1809). We

have seen him playing his part in Dance's engagement with Linois (p. 172), and have commemorated his single-handed capture of the *Medée* (p. 160). In March 1810 he was appointed to a smaller vessel, the *Ceylon* of 818 tons, and was forced to surrender her to a superior force on 3 July, but had the satisfaction of seeing his ship recaptured and brought back to her moorings in the Thames.

James Urmston was at sea, as second officer, first officer and captain, for thirty-one years from 1772 to 1803, and made ten voyages. He was sworn in as commander on 22 February 1781: and was in turn captain of the *Lord Mulgrave* (1781–3), the *Francis* (1785–6), the *Taunton Castle* (1791–2) and finally of the Company's ship *Sir Edward Hughes* for four voyages (1797–1803). On retiring from the sea, he bought an estate in Essex and served as High Sheriff of the county. He died at the age of sixty-five, in 1815, and was succeeded by his son, Sir James Brabazon Urmston (1785–1850), who was President of the Select Committee at Canton and was knighted in 1820. There are few captains who figure as frequently in Hickey's *Memoirs* as James Urmston.[1]

Our third veteran is George Simson, whose sea-service extended over twenty-seven years and who can be credited positively with nine voyages. He began as second officer of the *Princess Royal* (1772–4) and made the acquaintance of Hickey when he was first officer of the *Seahorse* (1777–8). After serving as first officer of the *Princess Royal* (1779–81) and the *Francis* (1782–4), he obtained command of the *Fort William* in 1787. Hickey relates that the ship was built for him in Calcutta by Colonel Watson, Major Mestayer 'and other men who had known him as an officer and were desirous of promoting his interest.'[2] He took her for five

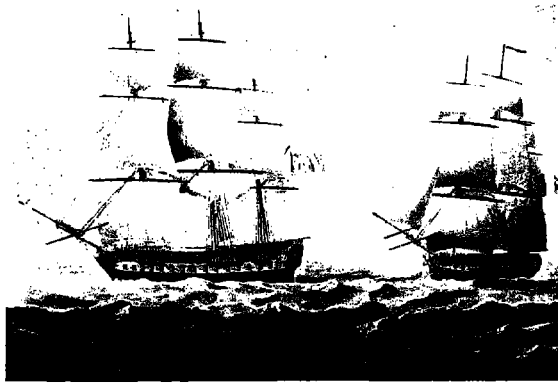
[1] Hickey's main reference to him (III. 322) is about his woeful panic lest he might lose his command of the *Lord Mulgrave* for granting a passage in her to Emily Warren, the inamorata of Bob Potts, whose father had protested to the directors against the captain's 'permitting a common prostitute to find her way to India on board his ship.'

[2] *Memoirs*, IV. 30.

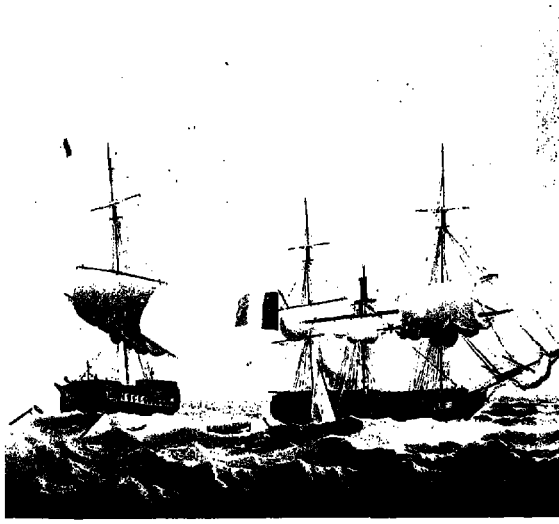
voyages and gave over the command in 1799 to Captain Joseph Boulderson, who was subsequently Master Attendant of shipping at the India House.

Sir Nathaniel Dance, the hero of Pulo Aor, is credited with twelve voyages in Hardy's Register, but must have made at least one more. He entered the Company's service in 1759, at the age of eleven. There were two successive Indiamen with the name of *Lord Camden*, and a third of 1,200 tons called the *Earl Camden*; and Dance sailed in them all. From 1766 to 1777 he did all four voyages of the first *Lord Camden* (499 tons, raised to 707 in 1778) as fourth, third, and (in the last two) second mate. In 1778 he shipped as first officer of the *Mount Stuart* and, on her return from the Coast and Bay in January 1780, transferred in the same capacity to the *Royal George*, which sailed for the Coast and Bay from Portsmouth on 27 July and was captured with four other Indiamen in the Bay of Biscay on 9 August, by the combined French and Spanish fleets. After taking part in the first voyage of the *Warren Hastings* as chief officer (1782–4), on 27 September 1786, he was sworn in as commander of the second *Lord Camden* (775 tons) and took her for her second, third, fourth and fifth voyages (1787 to 1799). His twelfth and last voyage was made as commander of the *Earl Camden* of 1200 tons (1803–4), when he acted as commodore of the homeward fleet from China which discomfited Linois.

An inscription over the grave of John Moffat, in the South Park-street burying ground, records that 'this humble stone was erected by William Moffat, son of James Moffat, who commanded the *Phoenix* at this port in 1800.' A period of fifty-five years' service on the Company's ships is represented by these names. John Moffat, who died at Calcutta in 1791, aged 56, sailed from 1764 to 1773 and was first officer of the *Hector* on his last voyage (to Bombay, 1772–3). James, his brother, who is buried close by, was a surgeon and made nine voyages on various Indiamen from 1762 to 1788. He had come to Bengal as surgeon of the

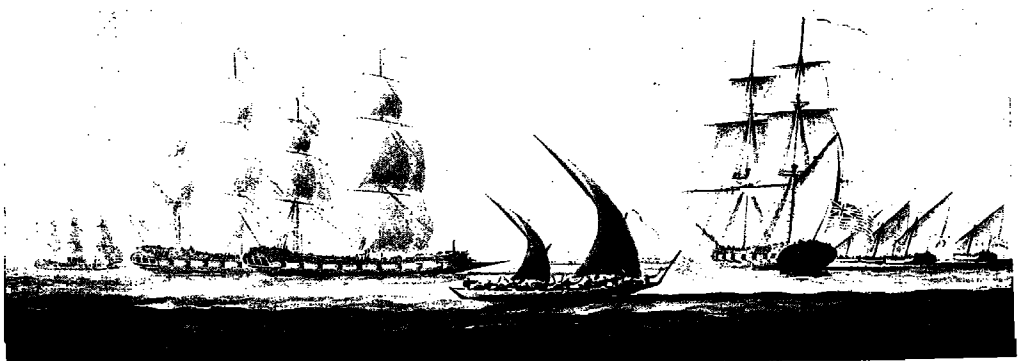


9 The *Warren Hastings* versus the *Piémontaise*, 21 June 1806.



10 — and after her fight (*see* p. 163).

By courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.



11 *The Aurora* attacked by pirates, 1812 (*see* p. 150).
From Keeble Chatterton's Old Sea Paintings, *by courtesy of Messrs. John Lane, The Bodley Head.*

Phoenix in 1788, and died at Calcutta on 31 October of that year at the age of fifty-five. The name of his son, William Moffat, first appears in Hardy's Register.[3] as third officer of the *Lord Thurlow* (1795–6). He was sworn in as commander of the *Phoenix* on 31 October 1799, and took her for her sixth and last voyage, which was to Bengal (May 1800 to June 1802). It was during this voyage that he captured the notorious French privateer, *Général Malartic*, in the Bay. His next ship was the *Ganges* of 1,200 tons (1803–4), and he shared in the glory of Dance's action with Linois. From 1806 to 1815 (except in 1810–11) he commanded the *Winchelsea*, and from 1816 to 1817 the India-built *Scaleby Castle*.

Mention has already been made of the Larkins family in connexion with the capture of the *Warren Hastings* by the *Piémontaise* in 1805; but this famous seafaring clan deserves a paragraph to itself. William Larkins, of Poplar, commanded the *Lioness* for three voyages, from January 1766 to July 1773. He then bought her and was succeeded in the command by his son Thomas Larkins (March 1776 to 1777), John Pascall Larkins, another son, serving as third officer. Thomas Larkins then took the *Warren Hastings* (the first of her name) of 755 tons, for her maiden voyage to the Coast and China (February 1782 to September 1784) and again for her second, which was to China (April 1785 to May 1786). His mother, Mrs. Christian Larkins, having handed the ownership over to him, the command passed to John Pascall Larkins, who was sworn in on 15 September 1786 and sailed in her for her next two voyages (Bombay, April 1787 to September 1788: Bengal, May 1790 to October 1791). Being commissioned to convey sepoys from Calcutta to Madras, he invited William Hickey, who

[3] As to James and John Moffat, cf. *Bengal: Past and Present*, v. 341, vi. 377 (giving a defective family tree), and xxxii. 131. William Moffat, Esq., appears in Hardy's Register (ed. 1820) from 1780 to 1820 as ship's husband of Indiaman, but he may have been a different person to Captain William Moffat, especially as a William Moffat is shown as third officer in the *Crutfenden* on a voyage from 1766 to 1767, when James' son was not yet born.

was an old friend of his, to accompany him. They sailed on 26 December 1790, and owing to light winds, did not arrive at Madras until 11 January.[4] The first officer, Francis William Leigh, commanded the *Warren Hastings* for her fifth and sixth voyages (July 1793 to February 1797). The second *Warren Hastings*, which was of 1,200 tons, now made her appearance and was taken out to China by Thomas Larkins, junior (April 1803 to August 1804). He had served his apprenticeship as third officer of the *Airlie Castle* (1796–7) and second officer of the *Marquis of Lansdowne* (1799–1800), and had also commanded the *Comet* on a voyage to Bengal (September 1801 to January 1803). The third *Warren Hastings*, which was of 1,000 tons, was built to replace her predecessor after her capture in 1805, and sailed from Portsmouth on 24 February 1809 for Bengal and China. A third Thomas Larkins was in command of the *Marquis Camden*, which belonged to John Pascall Larkins up to 1818, and subsequently to Thomas Larkins the second, as late as 1831–3. The Larkins family were ardent admirers of Warren Hastings. William Larkins, junior (the brother of John Pascall and Thomas the first), who was Accountant-General at Calcutta and returned to Europe on board the *Earl Talbot* in 1791, bequeathed to the Directors the fine portrait of Hastings by Romney which used to hang in the Council room at the India Office. The connexion with the civil service was continued by John Pascall Larkins, junior, who came out to Bengal in 1797 and retired on annuity in 1827. Larkins Lane in Calcutta is the solitary relic of that connexion: but of the seventy years' association with the Company's ships, not a trace remains.

In some cases a comfortable shore appointment in India awaited the 'Company's captain'; and in one case this was followed by a Governorship. Philip Dundas commanded the *Melville Castle* for three voyages (Bombay and China, January 1787 to June 1788: Bengal, February 1789 to June

[4] Hickey, IV. 1–2, 7–8.

1790: Coast and Bay, March 1792 to July 1793). His uncle Henry Dundas, afterwards Viscount Melville,[5] then procured for him the post of Master Attendant at Bombay, where (says Farington in his diary) 'he had £10,000 a year and accumulated £70 or 80,000.' Having shaken the pagoda tree, he returned to England and married a daughter of Sir John Wedderburn, by whom he had two children, but went back to the East as Governor of Prince of Wales Island (Pulo Penang), taking with him his wife and her sister. 'The climate disagreed with them,' is Farington's brief comment.[6] Dundas died at sea in 1807: Mrs. Dundas was sent to Bengal and survived her arrival only for three or four days. The double tragedy is mentioned by William Hickey, who passed Pulo Penang in July-August 1769 on his voyage to Canton in the *Plassey*, on the fifth day out from Madras. The place (he writes) was formerly uninhabited, but the East India Company had long since turned it into a colony then in a flourishing state, and had constructed docks of sufficient dimensions to repair and build large ships. But the climate had changed. 'It was long considered the Montpelier of India, and invalids from every quarter were sent there for recovery of health; but during the last four years it has in some measure lost its reputation for salubrity, numbers of the inhabitants having died.'[7] Besides Dundas and his wife, Hickey mentions that 'Mr. Oliphant, first in Council, the Chief Surgeon, and many other gentlemen of inferior rank, also fell sacrifices to the

*[5] Another nephew, Ralph Dundas, commanded the *Prince William Henry* from 1788 to 1796 and married at St. Helena in 1784 Elizabeth, daughter of William and Elizabeth Wrangham and sister of Mrs. Bristow, the Calcutta beauty. A third, General Francis Dundas, was Lieutenant-Governor and commander of the forces at the Cape from 1796 to 1802, and acted as Governor when Sir George Yonge was recalled in 1801.

Henry Dundas, who was for so many years at the Board of Control, was the son of Robert Dundas of Arniston. He was created Viscount Melville and Baron Dunira in 1802. His first wife, whom he divorced, was Elizabeth Bennie of Melville Castle; and his second wife was Lady Jane Hope. Hence such names for Indiamen as the *Arniston*, the *Melville Castle*, the *Dunira*, and the *Lady Jane Dundas*.

*[6] Farington Diary, 28 December 1807.

*[7] Memoirs, 1. 189. Hickey was writing in England between the years 1809 and 1813.

disorder prevalent that season.' Alexander Gray, the second in Council, who had commanded three Indiamen, the *Phoenix* from 1788 to 1792, the *Rose* from 1794 to 1798, and the *Ganges* from 1800 to 1802, was among those who were attacked, and took his passage home in Admiral Sir Thomas Troubridge's flagship *Blenheim*, which foundered in a cyclone off the coast of Madagascar on 1 February 1807, with the loss of every one on board, to the number of seven hundred.

More fortunate was Henry Churchill, who commanded the *Walpole* from 1783 to 1793. He was appointed Marine Paymaster and Naval Storekeeper at Fort William, and served the office of Sheriff of Calcutta in 1806. His predecessor as Naval Paymaster was Bruce Boswell, who commanded the *Earl of Chesterfield* from 1781 to 1786.

Two of Horace Walpole's relatives commanded Indiamen. Richard Walpole (1727–98), who was the son of Horatio Walpole, first Lord Walpole of Wolterton and the Prime Minister's younger brother, commanded the *Houghton* when she was wrecked off Margate, in 1752, on her way home from China.[8] Two years later, in 1754, he was captain of another *Houghton*, which with the *Suffolk* (Captain William Wilson, commodore) and the *Godolphin* (Captain W. Hutchinson) engaged a French 64 and a 36-gun frigate off the Cape of Good Hope on 9 March 1757, and compelled them to retire after a severe action (p. 155). Subsequently he became M.P. for Yarmouth and was 'ship's husband' of the *Walpole*, which had, in 1756, accompanied Admiral Watson's fleet to Fulta after the loss of Calcutta, and was captured off the coast of Ceylon on 20 September 1762, while on a voyage to the Coast and Bay under the command of Captain Parson Fenner. Augustus Townshend, who was his first cousin, was the son of Dorothy Walpole, the Prime Minister's sister, and the

[8] Another wreck off Margate was that of the *Mars* on her maiden voyage to China on 8 December, 1787. It was the first command of Joseph Farington's brother William (who had entered the service in 1770 as fourth officer of the *Duke of Gloucester*) and he did not obtain another.

second Viscount Townshend ('Turnip' Townshend), the minister of George the First. He commanded the *Augusta* for three voyages (1738–44), all of which were to China, and died in 1744 at Batavia, while on the third. His half brother, the third Viscount Townshend, married Audrey Harrison, the daughter of Edward Harrison, Director of the Company from 1718 to 1731, who had been Governor of Fort Saint George from 1711 to 1717, and was later an M.P. for Hertford in 1721 and Postmaster-General in 1726. Horace Walpole called him 'the pert boy captain of an Indiaman,' and derided his chivalry in challenging one of Lady Townshend's admirers to a duel. Another half-brother, Roger Townshend, was with him at the time of his death.[*]

One at least of the 'Company's captains' ended his days as a Scottish peer, viz. James Sandilands, who succeeded as tenth Baron Torphichen in 1815, and died in 1862 at the age of ninety-two. Exactly seventy-one years before, in 1791, he had shipped as fourth officer of the *Phoenix*, under Captain Alexander Gray, on a voyage to the Coast and Bay and back. After making two more voyages (1793–4: 1795–7) as third, and then as second officer of the *Fort William*, he was sworn in as commander of the *Walpole* on 2 January 1801. On his return from his second voyage, he lost her near Margate on 17 September 1808, and did not go to sea again until March 1811, when he obtained command of the *Rose* (955 tons) and took her on her maiden voyage to Madras and Bengal, which terminated on 20 May 1812.

Among sons of peers two are prominent — Hugh Lindsay and William Elphinstone. Lindsay was the eighth and youngest son of the fifth Earl of Balcarres and began his career at sea in the Royal Navy. The stoppage in promotion which followed the close of the American War, and a difference of opinion with the Admiralty, sent him,

[*] *The Lively Lady Townshend and her Friends* by Erroll Sherson (1926) pp. 6, 9, 19, 159.

in 1786, as a lieutenant into the marine service of the East India Company, with his friend James Ludovic Grant (afterwards Captain of the *London* from 1793 to 1796 and of the *Brunswick* from 1798 to 1804). We find him as fourth officer of the *Royal Admiral* (Captain Essex Henry Bond), one of Thomas Larkins' ships, on her fifth voyage to China (April 1790 — June 1791). He sailed next as second officer of the *Melville Castle* (Captain Philip Dundas) to the Coast and Bay (March 1792 — July 1793) and, a few more months after his return, he was sworn in as commander of the *Rockingham*, one of Sir Robert Wigram's ships, on 6 October 1793. He took her twice to the Coast and Bay (May 1794 — November 1795: June 1796 — December 1797) and then transferred to the *Lady Jane Dundas*, another of the Wigram ships, in which he made three voyages (Bengal, May 1800 — August 1801: Coast and Bay, March 1802 — May 1803: Coast and Bay, March 1804 — September 1805: Coast and Bay, March 1806 — September 1807). After three years ashore, he obtained command of the *Winchelsea* (1,200 tons) and took her to Bombay and China (January 1810 — August 1811). It was during his stay at Canton on this occasion that he had the 'Adventure in China' which he describes in a letter to his sister Lady Anne Barnard. The Hoppo of Canton[10] having refused the 'Grand Chop,' or port clearance, for the Indiamen to leave Whampoa on their homeward voyage, Lindsay, as senior captain or commodore, determined to interview that official in person. He set out accordingly on 2 February 1811 and marched through the city without molestation, accompanied 'in order to give the deputation a respectable appearance' by Mr. William Perry, the junior member of the Factory Committee and his sixteen fellow-commanders and their officers, forty-two in number, in full uniform but without side-arms. 'I have observed,' says Lindsay, 'in my intercourse with the Chinese that, however much they are inclined to oppress, a steady and temperate resistance has

[10] The Chinese superintendent of customs at Canton (*Hobson-Jobson*, p. 426).

never failed to succeed in obtaining redress.' On reaching the yamen, Lindsay and Perry entered alone, and handed their petition to the Hoppo, who 'saved his face' by meeting them in his state chair on his way to call on a colleague. The issue of the 'Grand Chop' took place next day and the Hong merchants.[11] whose misrepresentations had caused the difficulty, were fined.[12] This was Lindsay's last voyage. Having by this time acquired a substantial fortune, he retired from his command and in 1814 secured election to the Court of Directors, keeping his seat until his death in 1844. He was M.P. for Forfar, and filled the office of Deputy Chairman in 1826 and Chairman in 1827. His son, Hugh Hamilton Lindsay (1802–1881), was a writer on the Canton establishment at the time of the dissolution of the factory in 1833, and subsequently became M.P. for Deal.

William Elphinstone, who was the third son of the tenth Lord Elphinstone, belonged to an earlier generation. He sailed as third officer of the *Hector* to Bombay and back in 1762–4, and was sworn in as commander of the *Triton* on 10 September 1766. Of the four voyages which he made in her, two were to the Coast and China (December 1766 to

[11] These were a body of Chinese merchants at Canton who had the monopoly of trade with foreigners in return for which they became security for the good behaviour of the foreigners, and for their payment of dues (*Hobson-Jobson*, p. 421).

*[12] See *Lives of the Lindsays* (John Murray, 1849), III. 477–87, or (ed. Wigan, 1840), IV. 281–95; and also Morse, III. 156. The letter is printed along with Robert Lindsay's 'Anecdotes of an Indian Life,' James and John Lindsay's account of the battle of Pollilore (near Conjeveram) when Colonel Baillie's force was cut to pieces by Hyder Ali, and James Lindsay's journal of his three years and ten months' imprisonment from November 1780 at Seringapatam. The lives of these Lindsays were certainly worth writing. Alexander, the sixth Earl of Balcarres, was Governor of Jamaica (1795–6); while Robert, the second brother (1754–1836), went out to Bengal as a writer in 1772 and made his fortune in Sylhet. The third brother, Colin (1755–96), who fought at St. Lucia (West Indies) in 1779, as well as at Gibraltar in 1782, became a brigadier-general and served in America. The fourth, James Stair (1758–83), was a captain in Lord Macleod's Highlanders, and was killed at the siege of Cuddalore under Sir Eyre Coote. The fifth brother, William (1759–85) was a midshipman on the *Marquis of Rockingham* Indiaman in 1772 (then commanded by Captain Alexander Hamilton, afterwards a noted 'ship's husband') and was drowned at St. Helena in 1785, when on his voyage home. Charles Dalrymple, the sixth brother (1760–1846), became Bishop of Kildare. The seventh John (1762–1826) was a subaltern in Lord Macleod's Highlanders and became colonel of the regiment. Hugh was the eighth.

June 1768: January 1769 to June 1770), one to the Coast and Bay (February 1772 to October 1773) and one to Bombay (April 1776 to July 1777). On his second voyage to the Coast and China, he sailed from the Downs in company with ten other Indiamen.[13] One of these was the *Plassey*, with William Hickey on board. The *Triton* arrived at Madras several days after the *Plassey*, which (says Hickey) was first round the Cape by eighteen days. The ships left Madras together for China on 8 July and reached 'the Dutch settlement of Malacca' in company. Captain Elphinstone joined the *Plassey* party at dinner at a tavern overlooking the Roads and shipping, and 'being a most gentlemanlike and pleasing man, proved a great acquisition.' Hickey mentions that he could not resist the charms of the mangosteen. 'Captain Elphinstone was at them morning, noon and night, the whole time lamenting he had so short a period to enjoy them.[14] After Malacca the *Plassey* 'ran away' from the *Triton*, which was sailing heavily on account of the water she had taken in, and after riding a 'tuffoon' reached Whampoa on August 11, 'having been only thirty-three days from Madras, which was the shortest voyage that had then ever been made by an East Indiaman.' The *Triton* and the other Madras ships arrived several days later, and Hickey tells the story of how Captain Elphinstone tried to smuggle 'a smart little Madras girl,' in the disguise of a boy, into the factory, where the presence of women was forbidden, and of how he settled the matter through his comprador for five hundred dollars.[15] Elphinstone did not go to sea again after 1777. He had married, in 1774, a Scots heiress, Miss Fullerton, and retired with the customary

[13] This covers all those shown in Hardy's Register as sailing from the Downs on 2 and 3 January. Hickey's list (I. 141) includes five ships that did not sail till 17 January, and he only says they were together in the Downs.

*[14] *Memoirs*, I. 165–6, 172, 188, 191–2.

*[15] [*Memoirs*, I. 194, 212, 218–9]. Hickey found at anchor at Whampoa, eighteen miles from Canton, five English ships, four Swedes, Six French, four Danes, and three Dutch, 'all the foreigners being of the immense burthen of from twelve to fifteen hundred tons.' (*Memoirs*, 197). The *Plassey* was classed at 499 tons, and the *Triton* [in 1766 had the same register: but both were really over 600 tons, and the *Triton* was rated at 637 tons in 1775. The *Plassey* did not sail again].

fortune. Hickey met him in London, in 1780, and invited him to a large dinner-party which he gave at the Royal Hotel in Pall Mall on 28 July of that year. He was elected a Director in 1786 and remained in office up to his death in 1824. That his influence in the Court was great is evidenced by the fact that he was Deputy Chairman in 1813 and three times Chairman (1804, 1806, 1814).[16] His second son Charles, who was in the Royal Navy, was lost with Admiral Sir Thomas Troubridge in H.M.S. *Blenheim* (p. 180): and his third son, Major-General William George Keith Elphinstone, died in captivity at Kabul in 1842. He gave writerships in Bengal to his three nephews, Mountstuart Elphinstone (later the famous Governor of Bombay) and John Ruthven Elphinstone, sons of the eleventh Baron, and John Adam,[17] who was the son of his sister and William Adam, Chief Commissioner of Jury Court for Civil Causes in Scotland; but he sent his eldest son John, who died in 1854, to China, where he was President of the Select Committee at Canton from 1811 to 1816.[18]

Elphinstone's younger brother, George Keith Elphinstone (1746–1823) sailed as fourth officer in the *Triton* from 1766 to 1768, but joined the Royal Navy and commanded the fleet at the taking of the Cape of Good Hope in 1795. He became Admiral of the Blue, was created Lord Keith in 1797 and advanced to the dignity of a viscount in 1814. The Marquess of Lansdowne (Governor-General from 1888 to 1894) was his descendant on his mother's side.

The Hon. Henry Ramsay, sixth son of the eighth Earl of Dalhousie, joined the *Lord Hawkesbury* Indiaman in 1799 as

[16] By 1804 Elphinstone was the leader of the 'Shipping Interest' (Philips, p. 140).

*[17] John Adam acted as Governor-General of Fort William in Bengal from January to August 1823, between the departure of the Marquess of Hastings and the arrival of Lord Amherst. He died off Madagascar on 4 June 1825, when on his way to Europe, at the age of 46. There was a fine portrait of him by Sir Thomas Lawrence at Viceregal Lodge, Delhi.

*[18] The duties of the Select Committee, supercargoes and writers at Canton were purely commercial; and the emoluments were so high that Directors made it a point to secure the appointments for their sons and near relatives [cf. Philips, p. 130]. In 1812, John Elphinstone, as President, received £8,550 for his share of the commission of two per cent. on the amount of the sales.

fourth officer, and after serving successively in the *Tottenham* (1802–3), the *Duke of Montrose* (1804–6) and the *Nottingham* (1807) as second officer, died on board the last named ship in 1808, on the homeward voyage from China. He was the brother of Lord Panmure and of Lieutenant-General John Ramsay, who married Mary de Lisle in Calcutta, in 1800, and was the father of Sir Henry Ramsay, the 'King of Kumaon.'[19] The Hon. John Cochrane (1750–1801), fifth son of the eighth Earl of Dundonald, was second officer of the *Bessborough* from 1773 to 1775, and subsequently obtained the appointment of deputy commissary to the forces in North America. His brother Basil (1753–1826), who went out to Madras as a writer in 1769, made his fortune as 'agent for the management and distribution of liquor for the use of the army.'

The Hon. John Colville (1768–1849), who succeeded as ninth Baron Colville of Culross in 1811, served as fourth and also as second officer of the *Pigot* Indiaman from 1786 to 1790, when he likewise joined the Navy and became Admiral of the White. The Hon. Gerrard Turnour, second son of the first Earl Winterton, who died unmarried in 1824, was fourth officer on the *Winterton* Indiaman from 1785 to 1786, and second officer from 1788 to 1790. His brother, George Turnour, died at Jaffnapatram in Ceylon on 19 April 1819 at the age of 51. His wife, who was a niece of the Cardinal Duc de Bausset (d. 1846), and two infant daughters are buried in the English Cemetery at Pondicherry. Finally, Frederick Thesiger, uncle of Lord Chancellor Chelmsford, was fourth officer of the *Worcester* Indiaman from 1777 to 1778 and, after a considerable interval, first officer of the *Pitt* from 1786 to 1787. He was subsequently a post-captain in the Royal Navy and acted as aide-de-camp to Nelson at the bombardment of Copenhagen in 1801.

[19] Kumaon is the most northerly part of the United Provinces, and includes the district of Naini Tal. Sir Henry Ramsay was Commissioner of it from 1856 to 1884, and his patriarchal rule, well-suited to its conditions, led to his title of 'King of Kumaon' (Buckland, *Dictionary of Indian Biography*, p. 349).

Quite a number of baronets figure on the roll of the Company's maritime service, but one only held command while in actual enjoyment of the title. Sir Charles Hudson, of Melton Mowbray, was the sixth holder of a baronetcy which had been conferred in 1660. He was born at Poplar, where his father Sir Skeffington Hudson is buried, and succeeded him in February 1760. After serving as first officer of the *Talbot*, under Captain Thomas Dethick, on her first voyage (Bombay, January 1763 to July 1766), he bought the command and took her for her next voyages (Coast and Bay, March 1768 — January 1770: Coast and China, February 1771 — September 1772). He died on 18 October 1773, and was succeeded by his son, Sir Charles Vallavine Hudson, who followed in his father's footsteps. We find him as fourth officer of the *Talbot* when she made her fourth voyage, which was to Bombay (March 1775 to November 1776) under the command of Captain Raymond Snow, and again as second officer of the *Duke of Kingston* (Captain Justinian Nutt) on a voyage to the Coast and Bay (November 1779 to October 1781). There is little further record of him, and he is believed to have died unmarried about the year 1781, when the title became extinct.

Another baronet, Sir James Dalrymple, sailed as fourth officer in the *Dublin*, under Captain William Smith, on her fifth voyage which was to the Coast and Bay (May 1796 — December 1797). On 7 January 1800, he shipped as second officer on board the *Earl Talbot* of 1,200 tons (Captain John Hamilton Dempster). She was making her second voyage to Bombay and China and foundered in the following October on the Praters or Pratas Islands, a rocky group in the South China Sea, lying midway between Hong Kong and the Channel to the north of the Phillipines. Both Dalrymple and the commander were among the drowned. James Dalrymple was the son of a Lord Provost of Edinburgh and nephew of Alexander Dalrymple (1737–1808), member of the Madras Council from 1775 to 1777, who became hydrographer to the India House in 1779 and to the

Admiralty in 1795. Another of his uncles was Sir David Dalrymple, the well known Scots judge, Lord Hailes, whom he succeeded in 1792 as fourth baronet of Hailes.

Sir George Richardson commanded an Indiaman for many years, but did not succeed to his baronetcy until 1788, when he had retired from the sea. He took the *Pigot* for four voyages (Coast and Bay, April 1763 to October 1764: and again, February 1766 to October 1767: Coast and China from January 1769 to June 1770: St. Helena and Bencoolen, June 1771 to July 1773) and the *Ganges* for one voyage (March 1779 to February 1781). His three sons were born before his marriage with their mother, who was a daughter of Captain David Cooper, R.N.; and on his death in 1791, his brother John, denying their legitimacy, assumed the title. Hickey has some entertaining stories to tell[20] of 'Sir' John Richardson, who was a barrister of the Middle Temple and was sworn in as an advocate of the Supreme Court at Fort William on 22 October 1790. He died in Calcutta on 5 May 1795. Meanwhile the title had been borne *de jure* by his eldest nephew, George Preston Richardson, a major in the 64th Foot, who died at Barbadoes in his twenty-sixth year on 21st October 1803 of wounds received on 22 June at the recapture of St. Lucia. He was succeeded as eleventh baronet by his brother James, a lieutenant in the 17th Bengal Infantry, who died on 8 November 1804, of wounds received in the action fought by Lord Lake at Farrukhabad on 31 October. The third brother and twelfth baronet, John Charles, was a commander in the Royal Navy. Upon his death on 12 April 1821, at the age of thirty-six, the title became dormant, and was not revived until 1837.

William Fraser, who received a baronetcy in 1806, was sworn in on 6 October 1772, as commander of the *Lord Mansfield* (499 tons), which was lost in 'the Bengal river' on 6 September 1773. He then commanded a new *Earl of Mansfield* (758 tons) from 1777 to 1785, and having made the traditional three voyages, went into business as a ship's

[20] Hickey, IV. 82–3, 126; see also *Bengal: Past and Present*, XXXII. 25.

husband on a large scale. The second baronet, Sir William Fraser, who succeeded in 1818 and died in 1827, was a member of the Select Committee at Canton.

Richard Hardinge, whose baronetcy dates from 1801, was the uncle of Henry Hardinge of Lahore, who was Governor-General of India from 1844 to 1848, and of Captain George Nicholas Hardinge, the gallant young captain of H.M.S. *San Fiorenzo* who was killed in the action with *La Piémontaise* in 1808 (p. 164). His was a long career at sea. In January 1776, he sailed as fourth officer of the *Lord Camden* to the Coast and China; he was then second officer of the *Godfrey* (1778–80) and first officer of the *Ganges* (1782–5) and was sworn in as commander of the *Kent* (755 tons) on 26 October 1785, in succession to Captain Peter Stoakes, who died at Madras on 30 September 1783. He took her for four voyages (December 1785 to August 1794), and with the fortune thus acquired became a ship's husband. The baronetcy descended in 1826 to his eldest nephew, Charles, and from him to his brother Henry, the Governor-General.

Of an earlier generation was Sir William James (1721–83) the famous commodore of the Bombay Marine. He went to sea at the age of twelve and was in command of a ship at twenty.[21] In 1751 he was appointed commander-in-chief of the Company's marine forces, and captured the sea-fortress Severndroog (Suvarnadurg) from the Mahratta pirate, Tulaji Angria, in March 1755. Returning to Europe in 1759, he was M.P. for West Looe in Cornwall from 1774 to 1783, and was a Director of the Company from 1768 until his death in 1783, thrice Deputy Chairman (1776, 1778, and 1781), and an Elder Brother and Deputy Master of the Trinity House. In 1778, the year preceding that in which he served the office of Chairman, he received a baronetcy. According to Hawkesworth's *East Indian Chronologist*, which was published at Calcutta in 1801, he 'was succeeded in his Honours by his only son, whom he had by his second wife, an Indian lady: Richard James was the first native

[21] For further details of his early life, see Low, I. 125–7.

of Hindostan who succeeded to the hereditary Honours of England.' The statement, however, if picturesque, is hardly accurate. His only son was named Edward William and died unmarried at the age of eighteen, and his second wife, Ann Goddard, of Hartham in Wiltshire, whom he married about the year 1765, was Anglo-Indian only to the extent that she inherited a large portion of the fortune of her relative General Thomas Goddard. She commemorated the exploit which brought her husband fame by building after his death a tower on Shooter's Hill, Blackheath, which is still known as Severndroog Castle. James' portrait was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds. We learn from Joseph Farington that it was James who got the Baron Imhoff the Madras cadetship which led him in March 1769 to 'take a passage to Madras for himself and Mrs. Imhoff in the *Duke of Grafton* Indiaman, when Mr. Hastings was also a passenger going out as second in Council to Madras.'[22]

Robert Preston, who was sworn in as commander of the *Asia* on 8 January 1768, was another baronet and M.P. for Dover in the Parliament of 1784. He owned many Indiamen, including the *Pigot* (1789), the *Foulis* (1790), the *Belmont* (1792) and the *Cuffnells* (1796). His sea-service dated from 1762 when he was third officer of the *Clive*, and he commanded both the *Asia* (1768 to 1772) and the *Hillsborough* (1775 to 1776).

A typical example of the successful 'Company's Captain' was Joseph Cotton (1745–1825). The second son of Dr. Nathaniel Cotton of St. Albans, the friend and physician of William Cowper, he entered the Royal Navy in 1760, at the age of fifteen, and joined the Company's service after qualifying as lieutenant. His first two voyages were made in the *Deptford* as fourth and second officer (1769 to 1772), he then transferred to the *British King* as chief officer and sailed in her to Bombay and back (1773–75). On 10 April 1776, he was sworn in as commander of the *Royal Charlotte* of 758 tons register, of which John Clements, her former

[22] Farington Diary, 4 June 1795.

captain, had become 'husband.' He took her for two voyages, the first to the Coast and China (1777–8) and the second to St. Helena and Bombay (1780–2). In 1795 he secured a seat in the Court of Directors and held it until two years before his death in 1825.[23] He was also an elder brother of the Trinity House from 1788 to 1808 and deputy master in 1803, and wrote a history of the House. But his chief claim to remembrance lies in his association with the East India Dock Company.[24] The foundation stone of the undertaking, which was laid on 4 March 1804, was discovered in 1914 at the base of one of the old quay walls. It bears the name of Joseph Cotton, Chairman, and John Woolmore,[25] deputy chairman; and the memory of both is recalled by Cotton's Wharf, and Cotton Street and Woolmore Street in Poplar. Joseph Cotton married a daughter of John Harrison, who was a Director of the East India Company for twenty-one years (1758–71, 1774–82) and Chairman in 1775. He sent his eldest son, Joseph, to China and his second son, John, who followed him in the Court of Directors (1833–53), as a writer to Madras, where he served from 1801 to 1830, thereby establishing a connexion with India that remained unbroken up to the [end of British rule in that country.][26]

[23] Joseph Cotton was one of the leaders of the 'old' shipping interest. For its struggle with the 'new' one, ending in the victory of the latter in 1796, and the temporary triumph of the combined shipping interest 1802–6, which prevented the extension of British private trade in India, advocated by Lord Wellesley, and with other reasons led to his recall in 1805, see Philips, pp. 80–151, and cf. p. 49 *ante*.

[24] The East India Dock Company was authorised, and its powers and duties regulated by local Acts of 1803 (43 Geo. 3, cap. 126) and 1806 (46 Geo. 3, cap. 113). The reasons which led to the building of the docks, and some of the regulations for their administration, are given by Chatterton, pp. 182–3. An engraving of the docks by William Daniell in 1808 is reproduced (with some details of their origin) in Sir William Foster's *John Company*, pp. 150–2.

[25] John Woolmore sailed on the *Earl Talbot* (767 tons) from 1779 to 1791 (four voyages with an interlude from 1785 to 1789), and rose from fourth officer to second officer and commander; he then became a ship's husband and owned the *Earl of Wycombe* from 1794 to 1800, and the *Earl Howe* from 1795 to 1806.

[26] The words in brackets replace Sir Evan Cotton's 'present day' of the nineteen-thirties. The connexion goes even beyond the grant of independence to India in August, 1947. It starts with Joseph Cotton's voyages to India (1769–82), continued by his service as a Director of the Company (1795–1823) and by membership of the

(*Continued on p.* 192)

A contemporary of his, William Money, who was a Director from 1789 to 1797, had been captain of the *Gatton* in a voyage to Bombay and back (1775–7). His son, William Taylor Money, was sworn in as commander of the *General Goddard* on 16 October 1793, having been chief officer on her previous voyage, and afterwards commanded the *Walthamstow*. In 1801, he retired from the sea, and three years later became Superintendent of Marine at Bombay and partner in a mercantile house. From 1811 to 1825 he was a Director, as well as an elder brother of the Trinity House and M.P. for Wooton Basset and St. Michaels (a notorious rotten borough in Cornwall). After suffering severe losses through land speculation in Java, he obtained a post of Consul-General at Venice, where he died in 1837.

Captain Nathaniel Smith passed almost directly from the quarter-deck of an Indiaman to one of the twenty-four chairs at the India House. We find him from 1758 to 1763 as commander of the *Clinton*, and from 1766 to 1771 of the *Lord Camden*. The first two of his voyages were made to the Coast and Bay, and the third to Bombay: and so profitable were they that he obtained election as a Director in 1774 and retained his seat for twenty-one years until 1795. He must often have foregathered at the Jerusalem Coffee-house with Captain Thomas Bates Rous, who was a Director from 1773 to 1779, and with Captain John Purling, who sat from 1763 to 1771 and again from 1777 to 1780. Rous (who was M.P. for Worcester City from 1780 to 1784) had commanded the *Britannia* from 1762 to 1767 and was the third of his name to serve the office of Director, Thomas Rous had preceded him from 1745 to 1771, and the term of

(*Continued from p.* 191)

civil service in India of his direct descendants for four generations, viz. his son John Cotton (1801–30) who was also a Director (1833–53), his two grandsons Robert (1837–67) and Joseph John Cotton (1833–62), his great-grandson, Sir Evan's father, Sir Henry Cotton (1867–1902), Sir Evan's brother Julian (1893–1927), and his first cousin William Bensley Cotton (1894–1927). Julian's third son Major John Richard Cotton, O.B.E., renewed it by entering the Indian Political Service from the army in 1926, and remaining in it up to the partition of India in 1947, when he became second secretary to the High Commissioner of Pakistan till he left India in Oct. 1948.

Alderman Sir William Rous extended from 1733 to 1741. Purling commanded the *Sandwich* from 1752 to 1757 and the *Neptune* from 1759 to 1760. As for Nathaniel Smith, he was thrice Deputy Chairman (1783, 1785, 1787) and twice Chairman (1784, 1788); and he was followed by George Smith, M.P. for Midhurst (1801), who kept his seat for thirty-five years (1797–1832) and was Deputy Chairman to Charles Grant in 1805. He was uncle of Charles Hutchinson Purling, who was evidently so-named from Captain George Hutchinson, the brother-in-law of Sir Eyre Coote and commander of the *Stafford* (1778–79).

In 1836 Captain John Shepherd was elected a Director of the Company. He joined the sea-service as fourth officer of the *Europe* in 1814, and made a voyage in her to Madras and Bengal. He then sailed in the *Duke of York* as second and first officer (1817–1821). On 4 September 1821, he was sworn in as commander of the *Berwickshire*, and subsequently commanded the *Hythe* until 1829. He kept his seat in the court of Directors until 1858 (the year before his death), and was Deputy Chairman in 1843 and again in 1849. As Chairman in 1844, in succession to John Cotton, he signalized his year of office by recalling Lord Ellenborough. Sir William Foster in his book on the East India House quotes (p. 234) the story, as it is told by the late Mr. Alexander Innes Shand in his Recollections:[27]

> 'I well remember his telling his brother[28] when sitting down to luncheon on the skirts of an Aberdeenshire bog that his mind was made up, that the Governor-General must come back, and that he was ready to carry the war into the enemy's camp.'

The Chairman was as good as his word: and the

*[27] *Days of the Past*: by Alexander Innes Shand (Constable, 1905), p. 66. [For a succinct statement of the reasons for Lord Ellenborough's recall, see P. E. Roberts *Geographical History of India* (1924), p. 332. Under Pitt's Act of 1784 and the Charter Acts of 1793 and 1833, both the Crown and the Company's directors had each a separate right of dismissal].

*[28] Captain Thomas Shepherd who commanded the *Hythe* from 1830 to 1831 and the *Lady Melville* from 1832 to 1833. He 'married early and retired in comfortable circumstances' to end his days at Aberdeen.

Governor-General, who was Lord Ellenborough, did come back, in spite of the opposition of Sir Robert Peel, the Duke of Wellington, and Queen Victoria, who showed her displeasure by promoting him to an earldom.[29] Shepherd's tone made a great impression upon Mr. Shand: 'He spoke as if he had the Directors in his pockets: and I verily believe he had, for he was a man of no ordinary sagacity and indomitable will.' He was again elected Chairman in 1850, and re-elected in 1851.

A colleague of Shepherd who likewise left his mark on the Court was Campbell Marjoribanks. He was sworn in as commander of the *Arniston* on 19 November 1794, and sailed in her except for one voyage in 1797–8, till April 1803. We have already (p. 156) had occasion to mention his encounter with the *Confiance* at Bencoolen in 1800. When he died in 1840, he had been a Director for thirty-three years (1807 to 1840) and had been thrice elected Deputy Chairman (1818, 1824 and 1832) and thrice also Chairman (1819, 1825 and 1833). Another 'stayer' died in January 1844. William Stanley Clarke, who commanded the *Wexford* in the memorable encounter with Linois off Pulo Aor, joined the Court in 1815 and sat continuously until 1843 — a period of twenty-eight years. His year of office as Deputy Chairman was 1834, and he became Chairman in the following year. Yet another ship's captain who ended his career at the India House was Charles Elton Prescott, who was sworn in as commander of the *Princess Charlotte* on 3 February 1796, and was a Director from 1820 until his death in 1832.

The most famous 'ship's husband' was Sir Robert Wigram who started life, according to Joseph Farington, as a surgeon's mate in the Company's service. We find him shipping as surgeon on the *Duke of Richmond* (St. Helena and Bencoolen, 1768–9) and the *British King* (St. Helena, Bencoolen and China, 1770–72). The next stage in his career was the opening of a small shop for the supply of drugs to ships; and by buying shares in Indiamen he laid

[29] cf. Sir Algernon Law's *India Under Lord Ellenborough* (John Murray, 1926).

the foundation of a fortune which, when Farington writes of him in 1809, was 'thought to be more than half a million.' He owned most of the shares in Meux's brewery and was head of a great agency house in Crosby Square, Bishopsgate. Three-fourths of the shares in the Blackwall Docks were also his, acquired about the year 1802 from William Wells, a retired 'Company's captain,'[*30] and his brother. Here he built the numerous Indiamen which he chartered to the Company, and which were the forerunners of the celebrated Money Wigram 'clippers.' His first venture was the *General Goddard* of 799 tons, which sailed from Bengal on 26 February 1789, and returned on 16 June 1790; and it so happened that her 'husband' on her previous voyage was William Money, who had become a Director. It was never worth while for Wigram to join the Court at the India House; but he was M.P. for Fowey (1802–6) and also for Wexford (1806–7), and distinguished himself in another direction by his family of twenty-three children. He was created a baronet in 1805 and gave the names of William Pitt to his sixteenth son (1806–1870). His seventh son was Vice-Chancellor Sir James Wigram (1793–1866), an eminent judge, and his tenth son Joseph Cotton Wigram (1798–1867), who was named after his shipmate in the *British King*, became Bishop of Rochester. Most of his children were remarkable for their longevity and he set them the example, for he was in his eighty-seventh year when he died in 1830. His eldest son, Robert (1793–1843), who succeeded him in the baronetcy, changed his surname to FitzWygram; but the old form was restored in 1920 by the sixth baronet, Sir Edgar Wigram, who was the grandson of Money Wigram (1790–1873), the fifth son. The fourth

[*30] William Wells was one of the many Anglo-Indian friends of Joseph Farington. He had sailed as second officer of the *Lascelles* when Richard Atherton Farington, the diarist's brother, was in command (China, 1792–93). He was then appointed captain of the *Albion* and took her for one voyage (China 1794–95), after which he went into partnership with his brother in the Blackwall Docks. Farington says (31 July, 1810): 'Mr. Wells might have had the Husbanding of as many Indiamen as he might have chosen, and have gained two millions, but he would not avail himself of the opportunities offered to him.'

son, William Wigram (1780–1858), established almost a record for length of service as a Director.[31] He was a member of the Court for forty-one years from 1809 to 1812 and again continuously from 1815 to 1853, and was Deputy Chairman in 1822 and Chairman in 1823.

Another 'ship's husband' of note was Sir Alexander Hamilton, who died on 12 June 1809. It was said that he ran away from home at the age of fourteen and went to the West Indies. 'After experiencing much variety in early life,' he obtained command of the *Marquis of Rockingham* (1769 to 1777) which was ultimately lost off the Coromandel coast on 23 March 1777;[32] and he prospered thereafter on shore to such a degree that he left property, including estates in the West Indies, to the value of £100,000. He was 'ship's husband' of the *Lascelles* (864 tons) and the *Henry Addington*, (1,200 tons), commanded by Richard Atherton Farington (1786–93: 1796–9), the brother of the diarist and Royal Academician, who mentions passing Hamilton's house at Topsham, near Exmouth, during a tour in the west country in 1809. His heir was his nephew Alexander Hamilton Kelso, a Madras civil servant, whose adoption of the surname of Hamilton is notified in the *Fort St. George Gazette* of 24 March 1810.

Stewart Marjoribanks, who must not be confounded with Campbell Marjoribanks, the captain of the *Arniston* and Director, was 'ship's husband' of the *Kent*, which made a famous end in 1825. She was built at the Blackwall yard in 1820, and left the Downs on 19 February 1825, with the 31st Regiment for India. During a gale in the Bay of Biscay, the cargo in the hold shifted, and a spirit cask burst open and came in contact with a lighted lamp. In a moment the hold was ablaze, and almost all hope had gone, when

*31 The record was held by John Manship, who was a Director for fifty years, from 1755 to 1758, and again from 1762 to 1809: but he was never Deputy Chairman or Chairman.

*32 '*The Marquis of Rockingham*, Indiaman, lost on a rock about ten leagues to the southward of Madras. The crew and the Company's treasure were saved': *East Indian Chronologist* (1801).

the *Cambria*, a two hundred ton brig, commanded by Captain W. Cook and carrying Cornish miners to Vera Cruz, hove in sight and rescued all on board except eighty-two. The *Cambria* returned with the survivors to Falmouth and met with a great reception. A medal was struck to commemorate the rescue and presented to the captain and crew of the brig. On the obverse is a view of the *Cambria* hove-to: the *Kent* in flames is on the right and two boats are shown on the left: below are the words '1 March 1825.' On the reverse is the legend round the edge: 'From Falmouth, Truro, Helston, Penryn and St. Ives': and in the centre: 'To commemorate the destruction of the Kent East Indiaman by fire in the Bay of Biscay, and the reception on board the brig Cambria, Wm. Cook Master, of 547 persons thus providentially saved from death.'[33] William Daniell painted two pictures of the incident for Stewart Marjoribanks. The first was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1825, and represents 'The distressed situation of the Kent East Indiaman, Captain Henry Cobb, when on fire in the Bay of Biscay on 1st March 1825: from authentic information.' The second was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1826, and shows the *Cambria* receiving the last boat-load from the *Kent*. Aquatints of both pictures were published by Daniell.[34]

Among the passengers in the *Kent* was Lieut.-Colonel (afterwards Major-General) Robert Boyce Fearon of the 40th Foot, who was in command of the troops on board. He was accompanied by his wife and several daughters. It is recorded that the eldest sister displayed remarkable fortitude, and that Sir Ralph Palmer, an uncle of Lord Chancellor

[33] The medal is illustrated in the Marquess of Milford Haven's 'Naval Medals.' (No. 578).

[34] Daniell painted pictures of two other ships of Stewart Marjoribanks: 'The *Hythe* East Indiaman off Anjere Point, Isle of Java, in the Straits of Sunda,' (Royal Academy 1833) and 'The Hon'ble Company's Ship *Duke of Sussex* off the Lizard' (Royal Academy 1830). The *Hythe* (1533 tons, Captain John Petre Wilson) left the Downs for China on 21 April 1821 and returned on 22 April 1822. *The Duke of Sussex* (1336 tons, Captain W. H. Whitehead) sailed on 1 March 1829 for Bombay and China and returned on 5 July 1830.

Selborne, who was Chief Justice of Madras from 1825 to 1836, resolved, on reading an account of the wreck, that the young lady should become Lady Palmer — a resolution which he duly carried into effect. Another of the daughters, who was a very young child at the time of the disaster, married Sir Alexander Arbuthnot of the Madras Civil Service, who was a member of the supreme council of India from 1875 to 1880.

Another 'ship's husband' who patronized William Daniell was George Palmer, the uncle of Roundell Palmer, first Earl of Selborne. Palmer was the eldest son of the nine children of William Palmer of Nazing in Essex, who was the head of a prosperous business in King's Arms Yard, near the Bank of England; and two of his brothers found their way to India. Thomas Palmer went to Bengal as a writer in 1792 and died at Sherghati on 24 September 1799, at the age of twenty-seven. He was an assistant at Benares with Mountstuart Elphinstone when Cherry, the Resident, was murdered there in January 1799. The other brother, Sir Ralph Palmer a Chancery barrister has already been mentioned; he was appointed Chief Justice of Madras in 1825 and died in 1838, eighteen months after his return to Europe. George Palmer made four voyages on his father's ship, the *Boddam*, to the Coast and China as fourth officer from 1791 to 1792, as second officer from 1794 to 1795, and as captain from 1796 to 1798, and again from 1799 to 1800. He then became a partner in the business house in King's Arms Yard; and was associated in his maritime ventures with Joseph Farington's friend Lestock Wilson, who had commanded in succession the *Carnatic*, the *Vansittart* and the *Exeter*, and exchanged the sea in 1799 for the business of an East-Indiaman agent at 2, Fredericks Place, Old Jewry. Among the ships which Palmer chartered to the Company was the *Dunira*; and an engraving was to be seen at the Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta, which bears the following inscription 'The Dismasted Indiaman: The *Dunira*, Captain Montgomerie Hamilton, totally dismasted in a hurricane

at night (20th January 1825), eleven hundred miles east of the Mauritius, Long. 73 deg. E., lat. 23 deg. S., which island she reached in ten days and ultimately made a quick passage home. Painted and engraved by William Daniell, R.A.' The *Dunira*, a vessel of 1,325 tons, left the Downs on 26 February 1824, on her fourth voyage to Bombay and China and returned on 9 June 1825. She made her last voyage to India and China in 1832–3, just before the Company's monopoly of the China trade was extinguished, and one of the midshipmen was Henry Palmer, brother of Roundell Palmer, the future Lord Chancellor, He was lost in the winter of 1834 in the *Elizabeth*, which was returning from China by way of Canada, and was wrecked in the river St. Lawrence below Quebec on her homeward journey with a cargo of timber. George Palmer became M.P. for his division of Essex in 1836 and sat in several successive Parliaments. He devoted much of his time to the improvement of lifeboats, and in 1843 procured the appointment of a committee to enquire into the causes of the many shipwrecks of British vessels which were then occurring.[35]

Our list of 'Company's captains' may fitly conclude with the name of Charles Beckett Greenlaw, secretary to the Marine Board at Calcutta from 1825 to 1844, whom 'the community of British India' honoured with a public memorial 'in token of the devoted enthusiasm and untiring energy with which, for twenty years, against the most disheartening difficulties he ably, zealously, and perseveringly advocated the cause of steam communication and finally secured its establishment in 1843.' Such is the inscription upon the pedestal of the fine bust of Weekes which stood in the lower vestibule of the Calcutta Town Hall. Greenlaw never actually rose to the command of one of the Company's ships, owing (it was said) to deafness contracted as the result of a sharp attack of fever; but he spent a dozen years afloat in the Company's service. His first voyage was made in 1804–5 as fourth officer of the

[35] See Lord Selborne's *Memorials* (Macmillan, 1896)

Lord Nelson, his next three as third, second, and chief officer of the *Essex* (1806–14), and his last as chief officer of the *Melville Castle* in 1815–16. In 1819 he was appointed agent at Calcutta for the loading and unloading of the Company's ships 'whensoever that post should fall vacant,' and arrived in Bengal in the following year. But the vacancy did not materialize, and it was not until 1825 that he became secretary to the Marine Board. In the interval he edited both the *Bengal Hurkaru* and *John Bull* (the ancestor of the *Englishman*), and discharged also for many years the duties of Coroner of Calcutta. He died on 15 July 1844, at the age of sixty-one and was buried in the 'new cemetery' in Lower Circular Road.[36]

[It was the fate of many a commander, officer, and seaman of an Indiaman to die in India, but they contributed to an essential link between that country and Great Britain which was of great service to both: indeed a purpose of more lasting value than that stressed in the finale of Kipling's praise of 'sailormen that use in London town'—

Coastwise — cross-seas — round the world and back again,
Whither flaw shall fail us or the Trades drive down:
Plain-sail — storm-sail — lay your board and back again —
And all to bring a cargo up to London Town !][37]

[36] cf. *Bengal: Past and Present*, v. 62, 369.
[37] 'The Merchantmen' in *Seven Seas*.

INDEX

'Co.' means the East India Company, unless attached to another name
'E. Indn.' = East Indiamen 'aboard' = in East Indiamen
'B.C.S.' = Bengal Civil Service 'Bo. C.S.' = Bombay Civil Service
'M.C.S.' = Madras Civil Service
'cmdr' = commander of an Indiaman
'G.G.' = Governor General
'&c.' after a page or pages = and *passim*

Other abbreviations are well recognised.

Most English place-names of a ship's arrival at or departure from, etc., have been omitted, as unnecessary. Names of all ships are alphabetically arranged under the heading Ships.

Pages where Indiamen are shown as burnt, captured, wrecked, or otherwise lost, are preceded by B, C, W or L in brackets; and those mentioned as taking part in Fights are similarly indicated by (F.) The first letter of a ship's name in brackets also precedes the page or pages where she is mentioned in the items 'Burning,' 'Capture,' 'Lost' or 'Wrecks,' as an aid to her identification in the list of Ships.

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